

# INDIAN ROCK PAINTINGS OF THE GREAT LAKES



Selwyn Dewdney  
and Kenneth E. Kidd

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS

INDIAN  
ROCK PAINTINGS OF THE  
GREAT LAKES

by *Selwyn Dewdney*  
and *Kenneth E. Kidd*

This book describes in word and illustration the results of an exciting quest on the part of its authors to discover and record Indian rock paintings of Northern Ontario and Minnesota. Numerous drawings were made from these pictographs at a hundred different sites; the originals range in age from four to five hundred years to a thousand, and were done with the simplest materials: fingers for brushes, fine clay impregnated with ferrous oxide giving the characteristic red paint. Where an overhanging rock protected a vertical face from dripping water or on dry, naked rock faces the Indians recorded the forest life with which they lived in intimate association—deer, caribou, rabbit, heron, trout, canoes, animal tracks—and also abstractions which puzzle and intrigue the modern viewer. Many of the paintings could only have been done from a canoe or a convenient rock ledge.

Selwyn Dewdney travelled many thousands of miles by canoe to make the drawings of the pictographs which illustrate every page of this fascinating and attractive book. He provides also a general analysis of the materials used by the Indians, of their subject-matter and the artistic rendering given to it, and his artist's journal records in detail the sites he visited, the paintings he found at each, the comparisons among them that came to mind, the references to rock paintings in early literature of the Northwest. Kenneth E. Kidd contributes a valuable essay on the anthropological background of the area, linking the rock paintings with early cave art in, for example, France and Spain, describing the life of the Indians in the

*continued on back flap*

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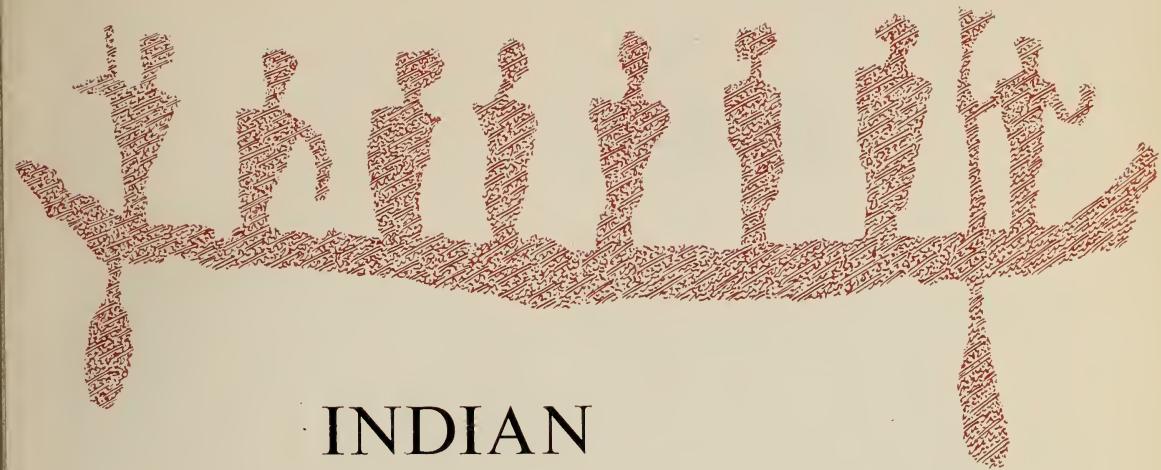
*Indian Rock Paintings  
of the Great Lakes*



The Agawa Site, Lake Superior,

Near Devil's Bay, Lake of the Woods





INDIAN  
ROCK PAINTINGS  
OF THE  
GREAT LAKES

*By Selwyn Dewdney and  
Kenneth E. Kidd*

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The authors gratefully acknowledge the generous assistance and advice of many individuals and organizations on which the four years of extensive field work were so dependent. The Quetico Foundation is greatly indebted to the Government of Ontario for its financial assistance in the publication of this book.



## *Foreword*

THIS BOOK is the outcome of an exciting and challenging quest by Mr. Selwyn Dewdney, artist and author, and Mr. Kenneth E. Kidd, Curator, Department of Ethnology, Royal Ontario Museum, to discover and record the Indian rock paintings, or pictographs as they are now called, of Northern Ontario. These pictographs, which may be found on the rock faces along the waterways of the Canadian Shield from Lake Mazinaw, north of Belleville, to the Ontario-Manitoba boundary, provide evidence of the cultural achievements of the early inhabitants of our Province. No doubt, the small symbols aroused the speculative interest and curiosity of the early voyageurs and others who have followed them. But it is only today, through the efforts of the authors of this volume, as well as the Quetico Foundation, the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Departments of the Government of Ontario, that they are being presented to a wider audience.

Numbering well over a thousand individual drawings, the pictographs have been obtained from approximately one hundred sites, the majority in the region west of the Lakehead. Their origin dates back perhaps as much as four hundred to five hundred years. Mr. Dewdney himself records that "no artist ever handled simpler tools or materials than those employed by these ancient picture-writers of the Shield region. Their paint came from the earth; their fingers served for brushes. Wherever on a waterside cliff the over-hanging rock protected a vertical face from seepage or dripping water and the sun could dry it quickly after a storm, on naked rock faces where even the tenacious lichens found too little moisture for survival, the Indian chose his canvas. A majority of the recorded sites could only have been painted from his bark canoe at varying water levels; a few only from convenient rock ledges."

Although traces of black and white can be discerned at several sites, red is the predominant colour. Fine clays impregnated with ferrous oxide undoubtedly form the ingredients for the red. The binder which has given the paintings such enduring quality is, however, a mystery to this day.

The pictographs vary greatly in symmetry and detail. In some instances the scenes depicted are marked by realism and beauty, while in others the drawings are abstract and, by conventional standards, crude. They convey an absorption with forest life—deer, caribou, rabbits, heron, trout, animal

tracks, hand-prints, and canoes—all of which were part of the realities of the day in which the artist lived.

A large number of pictographs are to be found within Quetico Park's 1,750 square miles. In order better to assure the preservation of this natural wilderness, it was my privilege two years ago, along with the President of the United States, to establish a Committee consisting of residents of both Ontario and of the United States. The Committee is making a notable contribution to the establishment of a co-ordinated development plan for the Quetico-Superior Area on both sides of the international border. The Quetico Foundation materially assisted in fostering the establishment of this Committee.

In addition to this work, the Quetico Foundation has been engaged in a variety of studies and educational projects. This volume is the fourth in the series that has been published. The Government of Ontario is pleased to have been associated with the Foundation and the Royal Ontario Museum in this work. The publication of this volume should help to quicken interest in our early history and stimulate further research and study.

LESLIE M. FROST  
*Prime Minister of Ontario*

Lindsay, Ontario  
October 18, 1961

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## *Editorial Note*

### *Pronunciations*

The current standardized spelling of the word “Ojibwa,” traditionally pronounced and frequently still spelled Ojibway, illustrates the confusion over the rendering of aboriginal Indian words for English-speaking readers. Chippewa, Chippeway, and Otchipwé are other variants of the same word. The following key to pronunciation of Ojibwa(y) words appearing in the text was devised by a trained linguist, Mrs. Jean H. Rogers, and is based on her study of the language as spoken by a northern band of Ojibwa at Round Lake. As she warns: “This key is an attempt to give the closest equivalents to Ojibwa sounds that exist in English. It is not phonetically accurate, but the best that can be done within the limitations of English sounds and English spelling.”

#### KEY

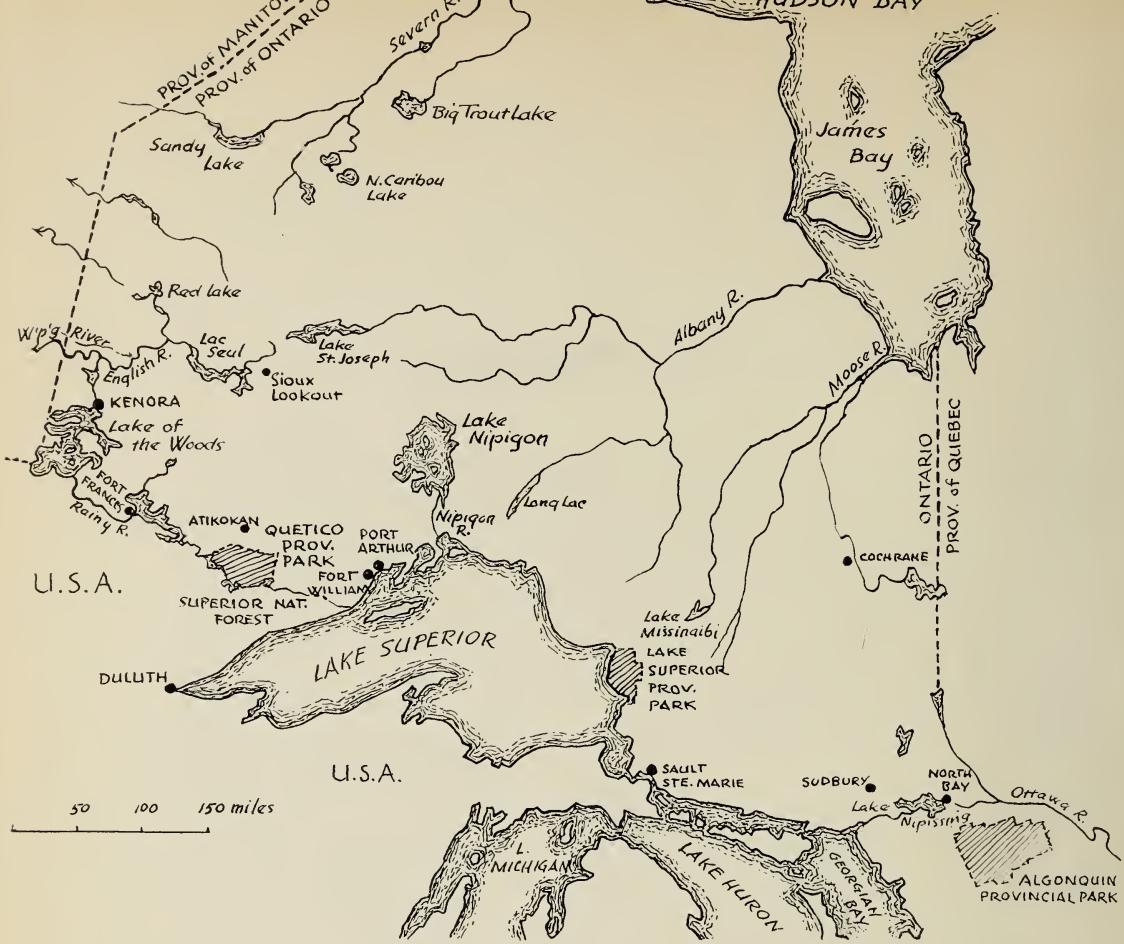
Vowels	ey	as in “key”	Consonants	ch	as in “chin”
	ay	as in “say”		sh	as in “she”
	ow	as in “bowl”		zh	as in “azure”
	iw	as in “ewe”		z	as in “buzz”
	i	as in “pin”		h	as in “hill”
	u	as in “cut”		(before a consonant h sounds like the ch in “loch” or in the German “nacht”)	

Each Ojibwa word, on its first appearance in the text, is italicized, and hyphenated to avoid confusion between the syllables. Thereafter it is treated as a familiar word.

### *Illustrations*

All the drawings reproduced in red, with the exception of the McInnes drawing on page 72 and the Agawa deer on page 83, are drawn to the scale of one inch to the foot, making them one twelfth actual size. An attempt has been made to indicate the relative strength of the painting by heavy or light shading, though the faintest have been exaggerated for visibility’s sake. The reproduced photographs of water colours from the Museum collection are also, for the most part, greatly reduced in scale, but not consistently. Readers interested in the actual size of the originals will find in most cases that adjacent line drawings in red provide the needed clue. Other photographs including the eight quadracolours, unless designated otherwise, were taken by Selwyn Dewdney.

*The Quest*

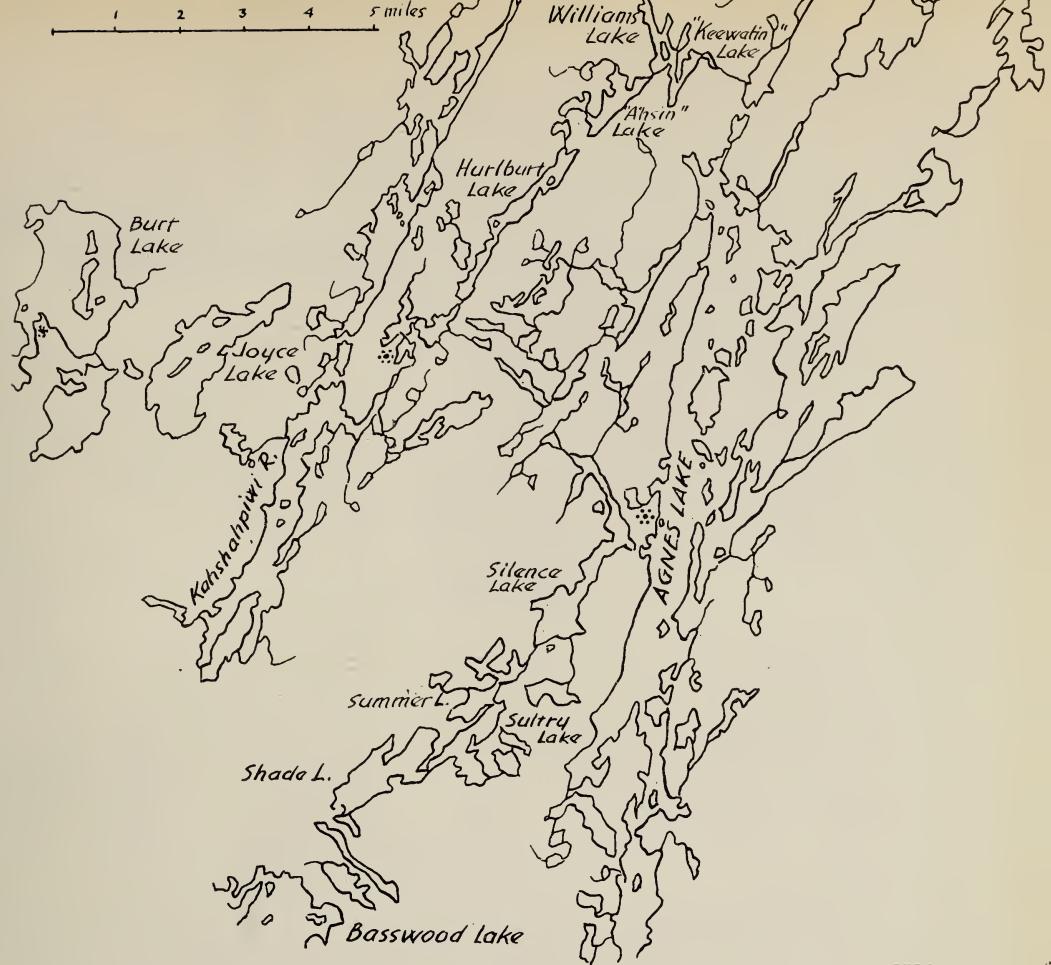


### *How It Began*

About fifteen miles southeast of Kenora, in the water labyrinth of channels, bays, and islands so typical of Lake of the Woods, you will come to the outlet of Blindfold Lake. Nearby, on the north shore, is a vertical rock above a sloping ledge, its face scattered with Indian paintings. As a boy I knew the place. Yet I gave the pictures only a glance, being far more fascinated by the offerings on the ledge, remnants of rotted clothing, chipped and rusted enamel-ware, and traces of tobacco.

Fifteen years later and 400 miles farther east I ran across other Indian paintings on the Fairy Point rocks of Lake Missinaibi. Later, revisiting the place with my wife, I made quick sketches of a few of the symbols—depressingly inaccurate ones, I was to learn years later. Yet over all the years that I knew of these two sites it never occurred to me that there might be others.

In 1955, as a book illustrator in search of fresh source material on the costume of early Indians in Canada, I called on Kenneth E. Kidd, Curator



of Ethnology at the Royal Ontario Museum. Recognizing each other as acquaintances from college days, we lunched together.

Only that summer Ken had viewed the impressive Lac la Croix paintings in Quetico Provincial Park. He already had reports of other sites in the area, and was happy to hear from me of another two. Would I, he asked, be interested in recording the Quetico sites?

It was Kenneth Kidd's vision of a systematic recording programme that launched and sustained the pro-

ject. Within the year he had enlisted the support of the Quetico Foundation and the co-operation of Ontario's Department of Lands and Forests. In the summer of '57 I recorded eleven sites in the Quetico area, and in succeeding summers added to the number in ever-widening areas of Ontario's northland. Today the work Ken initiated has resulted in my recording well over a hundred sites, and extension of the project far beyond Ontario's boundaries.

So far the highest incidence of sites has been between Lake Superior and

the Manitoba boundary. Here (p. 3) the land is so laced with natural waterways that one may paddle in almost any direction, interrupted only by brief carries. Here is one of the continent's most accessible fishing and hunting paradises, where increasing numbers of wilderness-hungry visitors annually renew their sanity. Here privacy may still be found, and the sense of isolation; where the only mechanized sound is the reassuring throb of a Beaver aircraft on fire protection patrol. Here, in the early morning calm one may paddle around a rocky point to glide silently within hand reach of a looming cliff, and stare in wonder at the mysterious red markings of a vanished culture.

Scores of such experiences have yet to rob me of the feeling of

suspense, of having been touched by fingers out of the past. Nor can all the details in the pages that follow adequately convey the intimacy of a visit to one such actual place.

#### *The Typical Site*

The photographs on the opposite page and below were taken at a small pictograph site on Twin Lakes, just north of Highway 17 and thirty miles east of Kenora. In the Canadian Shield woodlands of Northern Ontario, there are thousands of such outcroppings of rock—usually granite or gneiss—with vertical faces at the water's edge.

Few places have such large areas of bare rock as are seen here. Normally lichen growth of various sorts covers the whole surface: coarse

*Photograph by Klaus Prüfer*





Photograph by Klaus Prüfer

leafy "rock tripe" on the upper faces; crustose types, medium to fine in texture and often of brilliant colour, on the lower and more vertical faces; and, wherever seepage is constant, a fine-grained black variety that looks much more like a stain than a lichen.

In both photographs the light areas of rock are the lichen-free ones. Here the only covering agents are the light, pink stain of oxidized iron, the occasional white streak of precipitated lime, and—rarely, as here—the mysterious red markings of the aborigine.

Where the lime deposits form a background the stronger paintings stand out vividly, and can be photographed in black and white successfully. Sometimes lime solutions have seeped down over the paintings, obscuring them unless one moistens them with water. Usually the iron oxide of the pigment overlies the same compound that stains the surface from the weathering of minute particles of iron ore in the rock. If, then, the pigment is weak, it is difficult to see, and impossible to photograph without colour film. Since the underlying colour is essentially the same it is doubtful whether colour filters would help to increase the contrast.

Normally the rock gets enough moisture for lichen growth. It is only when, as in this case, an overhang ensures that rain and groundwater seeping from above will drip clear of a surface that lichens are discouraged. However, a slanting rain will wet the rock beneath an overhang, so that frequent exposure to the drying action of the sun is also needed to discourage lichen growth. The Twin Lakes site has a southern exposure. Others may face the rising or the setting sun. So far I have seen only three sites on which the sun never shines. In such cases the fuzzy green lichen which often obscures them is easily scrubbed off, unlike most of the crustose types on sun-exposed faces, which are extremely tenacious. Lichens originate in a symbiosis of algae with fungus spores—both carried through the air. Such a pair, lodged by accident on the same rock nodule, or in the same microscopic pore, lead a precarious

existence at best in normally lichen-free surfaces.

At water level the action of ice and waves tends to keep the rock clean. The remarkable thing is that such erosive agents seem to have had little effect on the pictographs on sites where they have obviously been so exposed for decades or longer.

As a matter of record most of the paintings are from two to five feet above the present water levels. Here, for instance, where the photograph shows me working at a tracing, they are within easy reach of a person sitting or standing in a canoe.

It is difficult to generalize about the typical location for a site. The example illustrated here marks a minor portage into an insignificant lake. We do tend to find larger numbers of pictographs on the larger cliffs facing the more travelled waterways; but this is contradicted too often by obviously important sites on small rocks in out-of-the-way places.

Only two generalizations can be made. The one colour favoured on every site is the "Indian red" characteristic of aboriginal paintings the world over. A limited use of white is made on two sites, of yellow on one, and of black on another. All sites so far found have been close to water, and all reports of sites away from the water have been traced to natural stains of oxidized iron.

### *The Search*

How does one go about finding Indian rock paintings?

This question was uppermost in my mind as my wife, three sons, and I drove north and west early in the

summer of 1957 to French Lake, the Canadian access point to Quetico Provincial Park. There, in a small colony of Park officers, biologists, and one botanist, my wife set up house-keeping in a small prefabricated hut while I set up my drawing table, got out my maps, and proceeded to check the reports I had brought from the Museum with local information.

That summer established the pattern I was to follow, with later refinements, for the next three years. People hearing of my work wrote in reports; I proceeded to the nearest jumping-off point, where I checked and pin-pointed the reports I had and collected new ones. Everywhere we went we talked to anyone and everyone: campers, Lands and Forests personnel, old-time residents, store-keepers, youngsters, tourist operators, and above all, local Indians.

We never knew where information might pop up. A navy recruit hitch-hiking from the Yukon to Halifax gave us a location to check in British Columbia; the Twin Lakes site we

got from the twelve-year-old son of a Ranger. We had no way, either, of separating fact from fancy. Reports of a painted moose six feet high turned out to be based on a tiny painting that I could cover with my hand. Pictographs on unnamed lakes were reported as being on the shore of a nearby named one.

As experience grew, a few working rules established themselves. Where there's smoke there's fire; the more smoke, the bigger the fire. Expect even the experts to disagree; all memories are fallible. And, not least, pictographs—like fish—are where you find them!

It is the original Canadians who are the best-informed in most localities. There's a special fascination about the way an Ojibwa trapper locates a site. First he will search your map with his finger till he finds the area of his registered trap line. As you watch the finger move you can tell that he is visualizing a frozen shore along his route, recalling landmarks as he searches his memory for

*Photograph by Klaus Prüfer*



*Photograph by Peter Dewdney*



the one of many rock faces where former inhabitants put their enigmatical red marks. He pauses and asks for a pencil, taking the one you offer to retrace his winter trail. He stops again, and asks for something in Ojibwa. A friend pulls out a pocket knife and opens the small blade. The Indian moves the knife point carefully, then makes a microscopic mark on the exact spot—as he remembers it.

A timber cruiser or woods inspector will be equally precise; but by and large he knows of fewer sites. Yet even they and the Indians are not infallible, and cannot always place a location exactly. All are long on memory, having trained themselves by long experience to recall specific landmarks.

Access to the sites varies tremendously. Sometimes we could drive in our Volks station wagon, with canoe on top, to within a five-minute paddle of a site. At others we might borrow a "kicker"—bush term for outboard motor boat—from the nearest Lands and Forests Ranger Station for a fifteen-mile trip by water from the end of the road. And again the site might be sixty miles from the nearest road or rail. In such cases we holed up and worked on drawings until a Lands and Forests aircraft was going that way on a fire patrol or a grub run, and had room for two men and a canoe. Then they would drop us off for a few hours or a day to pick us up on their return.

During the first summer, when I was based in Quetico Park, most of the travelling was done by canoe, with one of my sons in the bow. Two

very small and unreported sites were discovered in this way; but only eleven sites were recorded altogether. In subsequent summers I took advantage of every mechanized means available, and covered three times as many sites. Nor did this preclude the location of other unreported sites. On two occasions we even spotted a site from the air!

Such a feat was necessarily rare, and exclusively the result of the general ruddiness of the rock. At a distance this is easy to confuse with a rusty orange lichen, which more than once has led us astray. The pictographs themselves are so small, and often so faint, that they are rarely visible more than fifty feet away; and on one occasion I passed a painting, while working on others in the vicinity, at least a dozen times before I spotted it. Lighting variations account largely for this kind of experience. A faint painting on a light rock, with the full glare of a noon-day sun above, intensified by reflection from the water below, can become practically invisible.

Though I have recorded a hundred sites in Ontario and northern Minnesota, there are many more to record. Beyond, in the Provinces of Quebec, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan there are scores of others—many of them unreported. Any reader who can pass on information—or even rumours—will be doing this work a great service.

#### *Recording Techniques*

The drawings and paintings of the Shield pictographs reproduced in this book are based on direct copies of



*Photograph by Klaus Prüfer*



*Photograph by Peter Dewdney*

the symbols as well as on photographs. In the beginning I had no precedent to go by and had to work out methods based on trial and error.

I began by using string "co-ordinates" stretched across the rock at right angles to each other, secured by knots in rock crevices, by chewing gum, and by other devices. By tedious measurements from salient points of each painting to the string I could make an accurate scale copy. Later I based my copies on a three-inch grid lightly chalked on the rock, and washed off afterwards.

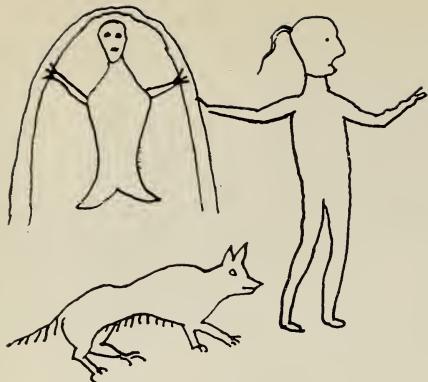
Experimenting with transfer techniques in my second summer I discovered that Japanese rice-paper, when sponged over wet rock, not only clings beautifully to every irregularity of almost any surface, but also becomes almost totally transparent. Using a high quality Conté chalk I could make direct tracings of all but the very faintest paintings. Notations as to lichen growth, cracks, height

above water, and so on, could be made directly on this paper.

Approaching a new site I first made quick sketches of the features of each face (i.e., a rock plane over which paintings were grouped or scattered), and measured the distances between faces, designating each, from left to right, by a Roman numeral. Then I made the tracings, which could if necessary be packed away wet. Colour photographs followed, and any time that was left was spent noting such extras as compass bearing of the face, depth of the water, height of the cliff, and so on. Site numbers (e.g., Site #33) merely followed the sequence in which I recorded the sites; but do indicate an increasing accuracy due to practice.

#### *Dating Clues*

Although it was not my work to make estimates of the age of the pictographs, I was responsible for recording any dating clues a site might



Schoolcraft, 1851; unlocated site



Lawson, 1885; Lake of the Woods



McInnes, 1902; unlocated Cliff Lake site

offer. Outside of skin-diving I covered all the angles I could think of, with particular attention to lichen growth, lime deposits, and weathering effects. I also noted carefully the strength of the pigment, for whatever value that might have as a dating clue.

In a number of instances sites I have recorded had already been illustrated: the Agawa site before 1850 by Schoolcraft, two by Lawson in 1885, and a dozen others by McInnes around the turn of this century. Examples appear in the margin. Comparisons of these with my records should yield further historical clues. In a few cases the paintings themselves offer historical clues, picturing forms borrowed from the invading European culture.

The painting of one symbol over an earlier one is so rare in these paintings (though common in examples on other continents) that it seems of little use. More promising is the overrunning of some paintings by various species of lichen. Through studies made by Roland Beschel, a botanist currently at Queen's University, in Switzerland, Greenland, and the Canadian Arctic, considerable knowledge has accumulated of the rates of lichen growth for various species. One species, for instance, tentatively identified by Professor Beschel from colour photographs taken at .5 metres as *Rinodina oreina*, an extremely slow-growing species, has overrun the greater part of Face II on Site #27. The pigment underneath is extraordinarily strong—as strong to all appearances as the same colour freshly squeezed from an artist's tube today. If the lichen is *Rinodina oreina*



Evidence of European contact  
(see pages 56, 42, 86)

the paint is at least a century old, yet apparently unweathered.

Lime deposits vary in thickness from a quarter of an inch to a barely discernible film. On the Cuttle Lake site a film over one pictograph is the background for another painted over it (p. 61). Since lime is a constituent (though sometimes a minute one) of most rocks, it seems likely that many of these deposits come from ground water that has dissolved the lime as it passed through the rocks. It is just possible, too, that phosphate of lime from bird droppings has been dissolved at a greater height, and re-emerged from the crack where the deposit begins. Here again are possible dating clues.

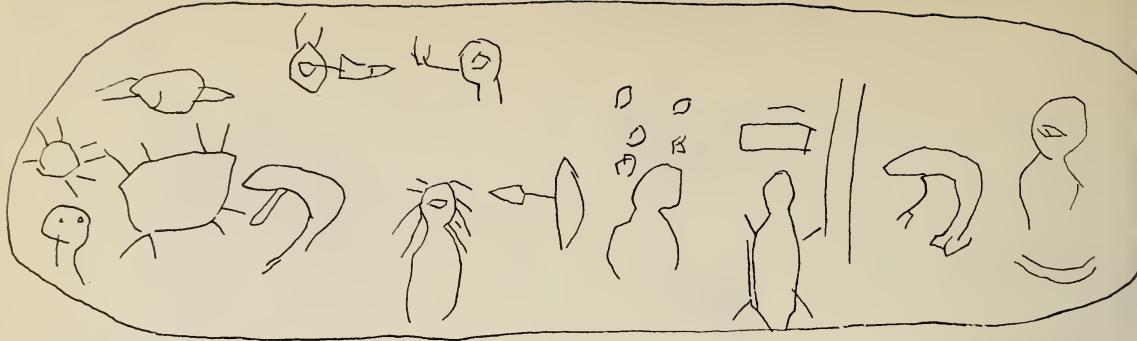
During the first summer I made a point of collecting pigment samples from smeared areas where the paint seemed thick. I was astonished to find that I could get only a few reluctant crumbs by scraping with a

steel knife. With rocks softer than granite the pigment is not so difficult to detach, but again and again I have found it so bonded to the rock that it defied my efforts to remove it. Compared with commercial pigments used in this century, the Indian paint stands up far better. In two instances initials have been painted on the same site as Indian paintings. In both cases the modern paint is already wearing thin.

A concentrated study of such factors by specialists, covering a group of sites such as the nine in Whitefish Bay on Lake of the Woods, might contribute substantially to reasonable conclusions about the age of the Shield paintings.

#### *Interpretive and Ethnological Clues*

Few who view an Indian rock painting can refrain from asking: What does it mean? Once there is any kind of break-through in dating



Above, and on opposite page:  
Ojibwa birchbark scrolls  
Courtesy, Keith Dalgettey

the Shield pictographs it will begin to be possible to relate specific sites to specific historic or prehistoric cultures. This in turn will provide some basis for working out interpretations of at least the paintings done within the last three centuries.

For there is a considerable body of knowledge about pictographic material on rock, hide, and birchbark, some of it recorded in the United States at a time when living Indians were still using, and could interpret it.

I am indebted to Frank B. Hubachek for my first glimpse of this material during a visit I made to the Wilderness Research Center in Minnesota in '57. Early in the nineteenth century, Copway, Kohl, Warren, and Schoolcraft accumulated a great deal of valuable information; this was followed by the more systematic work of Mallery and Hoffman.

Very little was then known about the Shield country north of Lake Superior, and most of the pictographs coming from the Great Lakes region were Ojibwa birchbark inscriptions from the Shield country south and west of Superior. The question arose: Were there any surviving remnants

of knowledge or practice among the Ojibwa north of the Great Lakes? If so, they might be related to the Shield rock paintings and my field work ought to include a search for such material.

There were two broad types of birchbark inscriptions. Small sheets usually less than five by twelve inches were inscribed with characters that served as reminders for incantations that would heighten the owner's prowess in hunting, love, or war. These were designed for individuals who bought them from a "doctor" as "prescriptions" for their ailments. A second kind of scroll was much larger (up to six feet in length) and far more complex. This was a sort of combined textbook and prayer-book, that gave directions for the initiation ritual of the *Mi-day-wi-win* (Grand Medicine Society) and also outlined the basic *Mi-day beliefs*—all in the form of picture-writing.

At Quetico Park that first summer I had barely returned from my Basswood visit when a Park Officer, Keith Dalgettey, brought over from Fort Frances his collection of eight song scrolls, all that was left of a cache

of a hundred or more that had turned up years earlier on the north shore of Rainy Lake. Two summers later in the English River country I was given—for the Museum—a large Miday scroll left ownerless by the death of Francis Fisher, one of the last practising Miday "priests" in the area. And the following year I was shown one of several other large Miday scrolls in the possession of a Lake of the Woods practitioner (page 109).

Another responsibility I felt, along with a natural curiosity, was to learn what I could about current Indian knowledge—if any—about the origin or meaning of the rock paintings.

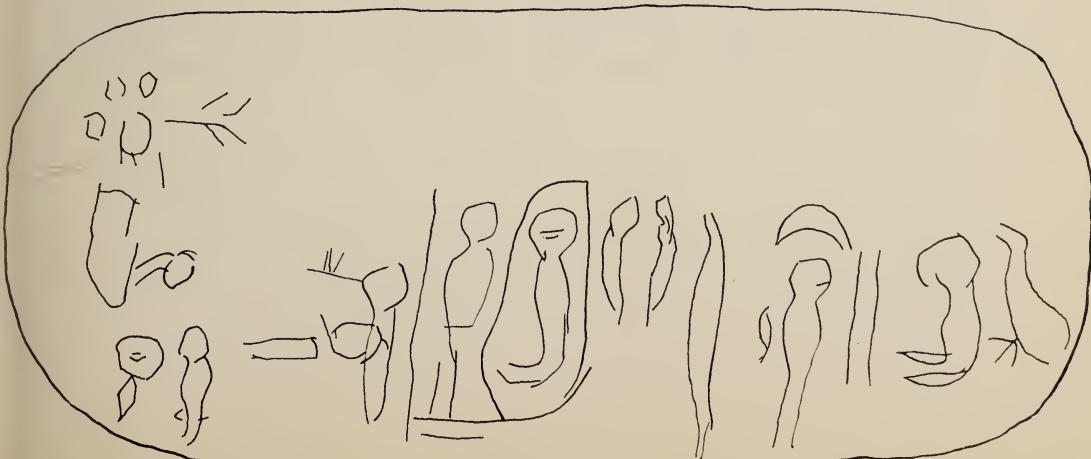
It soon became clear that no living Indian knew who made the paintings, when they were made, or what they signified. There were only the vaguest echoes of any tradition about them; most of the little I could glean was hearsay or conjecture.

It was otherwise, however, when I began to inquire about associations with the waterside rocks on which the paintings appeared. Years ago a veteran prospector, Jack Ennis, whom I had met on a bush sketching trip and stayed with a while, told me stories he had heard from the Indians of hairy-faced men who paddled their

canoes into the crevices of the rocks along the north Superior shores. Jack cited these stories as evidence that the Vikings had been in the area. But it is clear to me now that he had run into the little-heeded belief in the *May-may-gway-shi*.

The word is variously translated into English. Among the Cree, where these mysterious creatures are described as little men only two or three feet high living inside the rock, the English is "fairy." Among the Ojibwa various translations run from "ghost," "spirit," and "merman," even to "monkey." When I consulted Canon Sanderson (who was born a Cree but has spent all his ministerial life among the Saulteaux and Ojibwa) for a literal translation, he said the first two syllables mean "wonderful," but he had no clue to the others. The best rendering in English I could hazard from the scores of descriptions I have listened to would be "Rockmedicine Man."

Authorities disagree on details, but some features of the Maymaygwayshi are common over wide areas. They are said to live behind waterside rock faces, especially those where cracks or shallow caves suggest an entrance. They are fond of fish, and



frequently—more out of mischief than need—steal fish from Indian nets. Since they cut the fish out of the net instead of removing them normally the Indians get annoyed. Frequently one is told of Indians, determined to put an end to this, who visit their nets in the gray of early dawn to catch the Maymaygwayshi in the act. The Maymaygwayshi, heading for the home cliff, are obliged to pass close to the Indians. As they approach they put their heads down in the bottom of the canoe. Why? Because they are ashamed of their faces. In the south and east this is because their faces are covered with fur or hair—"like a monkey" one Nipigon Indian told me, holding his two hands up so finger and thumb encircled each eye. In the north and west there is no facial hair, the shame being due to lack of a soft part to their nose.

Specially gifted Ojibwa shamans, I was told, had the power to enter the rock and exchange tobacco for an extremely potent "rock medicine." Many Indians to this day leave tobacco gifts on the ledges or in the water as they pass certain rocks—"for good luck," they usually explain.

Direct connections between the rock paintings and the Maymaygwayshi are much harder to come by. To date I have only a scattering of comments with few confirmations. A Deer Lake Indian told me, for instance, that a rock painting of a

man with his arms held like this (and he held his own in a loose "surrender" position) signified a Maymaygwayshi. Another on Rainy Lake told me that the Maymaygwayshi reached their hands out of the water to leave the red handprints on the rock. And it is still a practice on Lake-of-the-Woods to leave offerings of clothing, tobacco, and "prayer-sticks" on the rocks at the foot of a pictograph-decorated face.

Another mythological creature of great interest that may also be associated frequently with the pictograph sites is *Mi-shi-pi-zhiw*, literally the Great Lynx, actually the Ojibwa demi-god of the water. At Agawa we have an authenticated likeness of this sinister deity of swift or troubled waters. In 1851 Henry Schoolcraft, the Indian Agent at the American Sault Ste Marie whose collection of Ojibwa legends was the basis for Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, published his *Intellectual Capacity and Character of the Indian Race*. Included in it were birchbark renderings of two pictograph sites painted by an Ojibwa shaman-warrior who claimed the special protection of Mishipizhiw, and proved it by leading a war party from the south to the north shore of Lake Superior. There is no room here for the material I collected in interviews about the Great Lynx, still feared and revered west and north of the Sault. But more will be said about the Agawa paintings (pages 79-83).

*The Aboriginal Artist*

### *Preamble*

Since we do not yet know when the paintings under study were made, nor of what culture or cultures they were an expression, any comments on the unknown artists must be highly speculative. It would, for instance, make an enormous difference to our attitude if we found that the paintings were the result of ten successive cultures spanning as many thousands of years, compared with the product of one culture within the space of a century. Nor do we know whether the paintings are the casual excursions on to rock of persons habitually working on other surfaces such as hide, pottery, or bark, or were done exclusively (and if so, rarely) on stone. Yet for the artist-recorder's eye the Shield sites do offer evidence of the aboriginal artist's choice of working surface, of spatial organization, of his painting media and techniques, and of his attitude as expressed in the form, content, and style of his work.

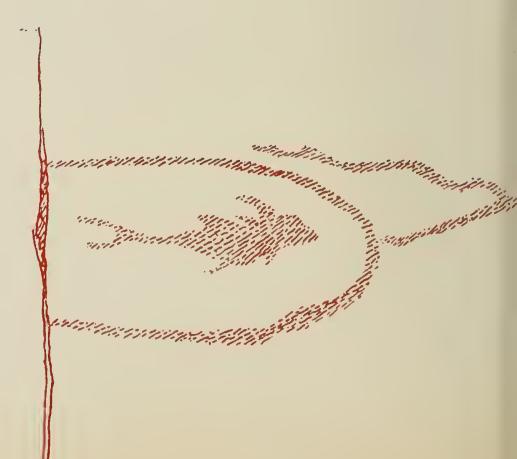
### *Surface and Organization*

We have already noted the artist's preference for a vertical rock face close to the water. The sites themselves show a bewildering variety of locations, outside of this one factor, and so it is with the character of the faces themselves. Some are rough and pitted or coarse-grained; some are glaciated surfaces, some fracture planes from earlier rock falls. Veins of contrasting colour cross some; cracks mar others. Sometimes irregular faces are chosen within hand-reach of smooth, regular ones. There is simply no evidence of any pattern of choice.

When it comes to spatial organization of the material on the chosen face there is again the widest variety. Normally design concerns the artist when space becomes limited. Where any lichen-free vertical face suffices there is no spatial discipline: the painter can put one symbol here and another three feet away. He can begin a pictograph on one plane, and finish it around the corner on the next. At Agawa, where we know that certain symbols are related to each other, we find some separated by as much as fifty feet.

Yet the viewer will find as he turns the pages that organization and design are not entirely absent. At Cache Bay, Painted Narrows, Red Rock, Hegman Lake, and a dozen other sites there are groups of obviously related material that form compact, well-designed compositions. We even find a few instances where the natural flaws of the surface are incorporated into the whole concept, as in the example below from Crooked Lake.

By and large, however, we cannot find in these paintings any special



concern for either the nature of the painting surface or the arrangement of the symbols.

### *Painting Media and Techniques*

There can be no doubt that almost all the Shield pictographs were painted with red ochres; a majority by using a finger for a brush. But what binder was used?

Red was the sacred colour for the aborigine in many areas of North America. Iron-stained earths and rusted iron ores usually occurred locally or could be obtained by trade. Colours range from a rusty orange, misnamed vermillion by some, to a purplish brick-red, varying in strength according to the proportion of clay.

On nearly every site finger-wide outlines may be found; on only a few are there lines too fine for a finger-mark; and even some of the larger forms show clear evidence that the original outline was finger-painted. Large areas were likely smeared by the same hands that left their prints on other faces.

We can scarcely suppose that the same binding agent was used by every Indian who painted a rock. But it may be that some binders were more permanent than others. Certainly most of the pigment now is difficult to scrape off with a knife. Why?

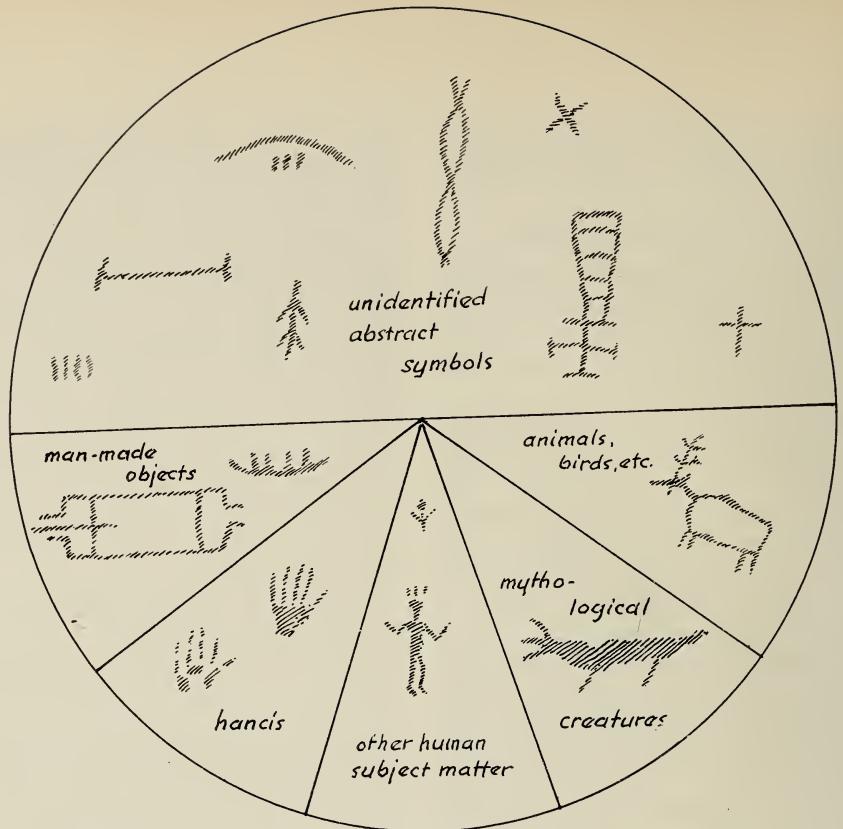
I found a clue to the answer in a non-Indian painting on the Red Rock site. Applied while dripping with the binder—presumably the linseed oil commonly used until this mid-century—the burnt sienna pigment, though still strong, rubbed off easily, leaving only a faint pink stain on the rock.

Here, surely, the pigment was so suspended in oil that it was separated by a thin film from direct contact with the rock grains.

It seems reasonable to deduce that the water-soluble fish glues or egg fluid available to the Indians would create more opportunity of contact, molecule for molecule, with the rock grains than the equally available sturgeon oil or bear grease. By the same reasoning little or no binder (i.e., water alone)—if no rain blew on the face while the paint was drying—would provide the ideal condition for such bonding.

The initials painted by the vandal in black commercial paint across the likeness of Mishipizhiw at Agawa can tell us a great deal. Dated 1937, we can already see the “red” man’s paint gleaming through the weathered texture of the “white” man’s. Here, facing west on the east shore of Lake Superior, the cliff is exposed to the fierce gales of the world’s largest freshwater lake. Waves and shore-ice from below, a driving rain, sleet, and snow from above expose this site to extremes of weathering beyond any other. We know that the Indian paintings are at least a century and a half old. Why have they endured, still clearly discernible, for so long?

There are mysteries here that theories such as mine do not altogether satisfy. Yet common sense suggests that various techniques and materials would have been improvised as circumstances and motives varied. Some happy combinations may have endured for a thousand years where more recent paintings weathered away completely.



### *Form, Content, and Style*

The diagram above forms a rough classification of all the symbols recorded in the hundred odd sites examined so far: more than 1,000 separate marks. Of these, roughly half bear no recognizable likeness to any known form and I designate them as abstractions. Many of them are single strokes occurring in groups or series that suggest tally marks. The remainder range from simple to relatively complex forms.

The other half of the symbols subdivide roughly into five groups: miscellaneous man-made objects, hand-prints, other human subject

matter, animals, and composite—presumably mythological—creatures.

Do all these variations in form represent varying cultures over a wide time span, or are they the expression of a single, but highly variable, culture? Since our present knowledge is so limited we must examine them, and reach conclusions about the men who painted them, in the broadest of terms only.

We are further handicapped by the current confusion about the standards by which a work of art may be judged. It has been highly instructive to note the reactions to the Shield

paintings of my fellow artists (including the avant-garde types), which range all the way from undisguised boredom to real enthusiasm.

No such confusion existed in the mind of Franz Boas, whose *Primitive Art* remains one of the most intelligent and well-informed attempts yet made to evaluate the art of aboriginal cultures. In referring to the "pictographic representations of the Plains Indians" he states that "their pictography never rises to the dignity of an art." There can be little doubt that he would be even less disposed to accept the Shield paintings as "art."

Few artists would dispute that the Bushman painting from South Africa reproduced below has a greater appeal as a human expression than the Shield painting shown beside it. Yet the presence of so obvious a delight in human energy in the one contrasts so strongly with its absence in the other that we are compelled to ask why. We cannot assume that the American Indian was more stupid or insensitive than the African. We must, I think, assume that his *motive* for making the painting differed.

Here Boas has something constructive to say. In comparing the decora-

tion of ordinary clothing among the Amur tribes of Siberia with that of their shamans' costumes he remarks, ". . . the painted dresses of the shamans are roughly executed. They represent mythological concepts and have a value solely on account of their meaning. The interest does not center in the form."

This gives us a useful vantage point from which to view the variations of the Shield pictographs. When we turn to the renderings of human and animal subject matter we get clear indications of a parallel trend. Out of thirty-five drawings of cervids barely half show sufficient interest in the subject to reveal whether they are deer, moose, elk, or caribou; and only five reveal the delight in form that is so apparent in the European cave paintings at Lascaux and Altamira.

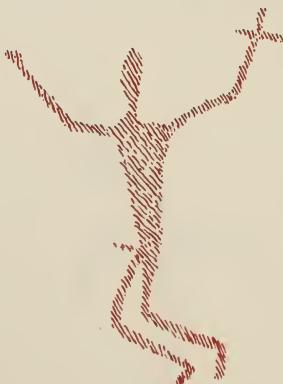
We have already noted the lack of action in human renderings. When we look for facial details, or indications of hair or head-dress we find the same lack of interest, with only rare exceptions. Hands and feet are ignored or indicated in the most rudimentary way.

A second quite different tendency appears among the recognizably ani-

Bushman painting, after Christensen



Shield painting, Quetico Lake



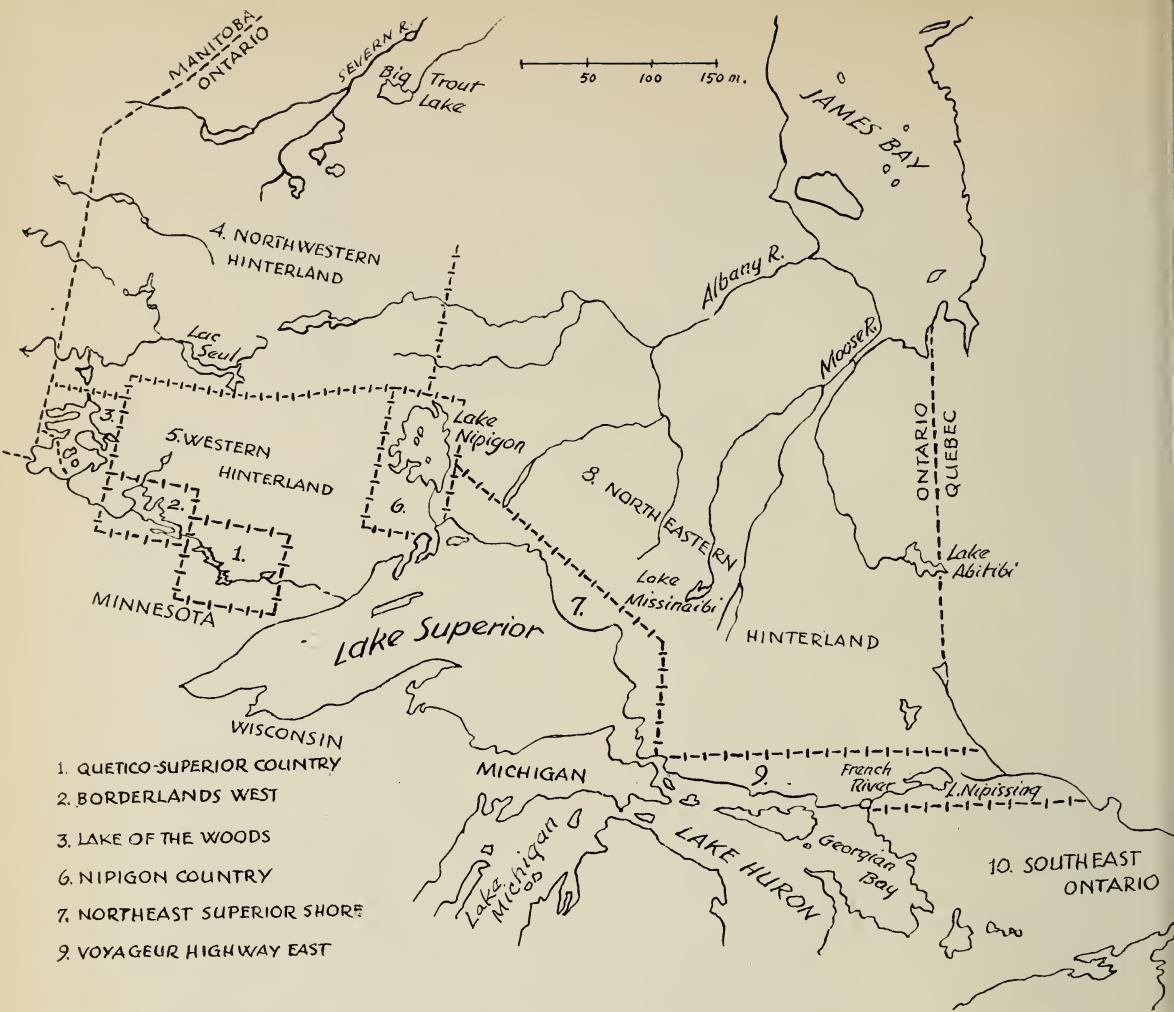


mate forms, both animal and human: distortion so startling as to be unaccountable for by indifferent draughtsmanship. This tendency leads us away from simple naturalism into a series of increasingly fantastic forms in which the forms we know are lost in a world of antlered dragons, horned, fish-tailed humans, and other nameless creatures. Beyond these forms, veiled from our understanding by a curtain of abstraction, lies the wide range of unrecognizable symbols; some of them, perhaps, simplified linear versions of dream-figures; others suggesting unknown artifacts; others again reminiscent of our own arithmetical symbols. But in even the most formal symbols, where symmetry is obviously intended, no care is taken to achieve more than a careless correspondence between duplicated forms. Nor can we say where distortion ends and formalization begins.

Considering Boas's distinction between *form*, as the visual aspect of a painting, and *content*, as the intended meaning, we may conclude that there is strong evidence in the Shield paintings of an interest in content that almost constantly overrides the interest in form. We may further suggest that the trend to distortion and fantasy relates to the Indian's known obsession with the importance of dreams.

To all appearances the aboriginal artist was groping toward the expression of the magical aspect of his life, rather than taking pleasure in the world of form around him. Essentially, however, the origin and purpose of these deceptively simple paintings remain a mystery.

## *The Sites*



### *Regional Divisions*

The Canadian Shield rock paintings described in this book are limited to those so far recorded in Ontario and adjacent Minnesota. In the pages that follow, each site will be dealt with in as much detail as space allows. Actually, a small book could be written about any one of the larger sites.

Regional divisions on the map above are purely arbitrary, as a convenience for the reader who wishes

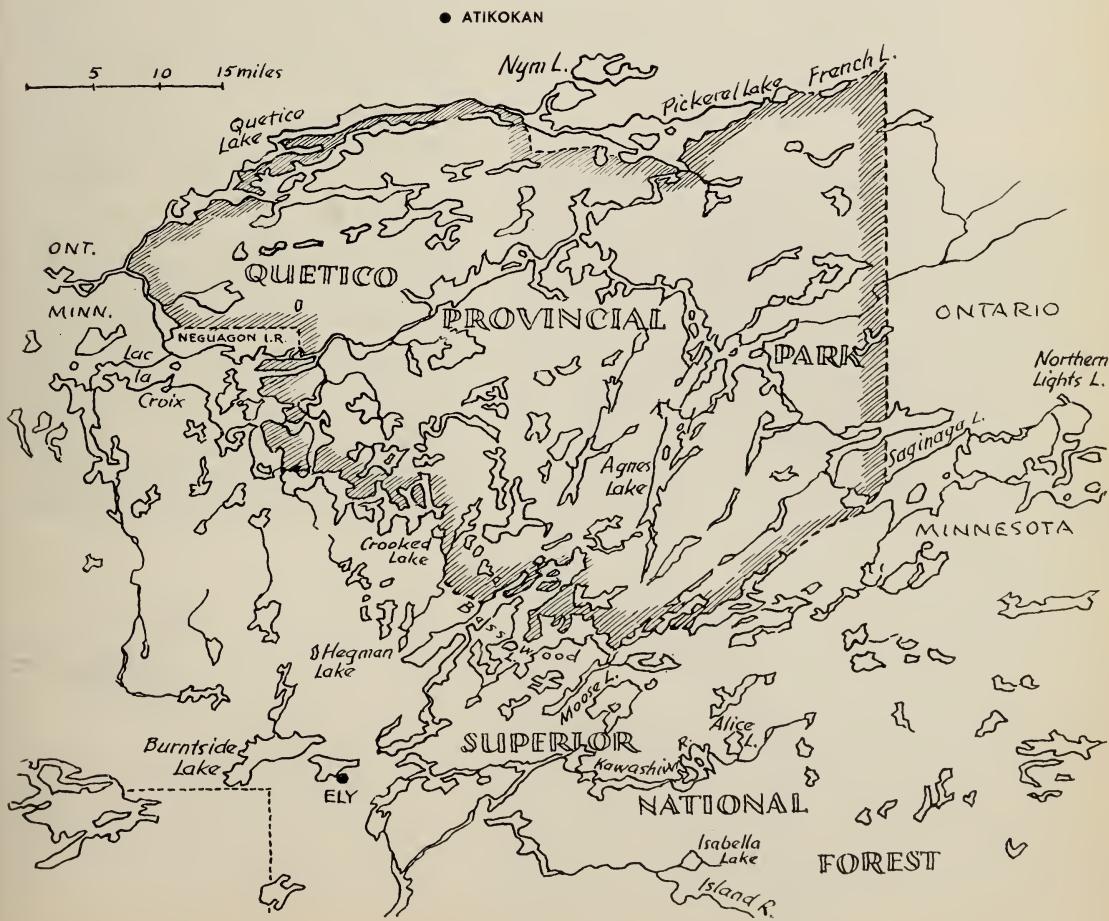
to keep track of the general location of the site under discussion. Commencing with the Quetico-Superior region where the work began, we shall move westward along the border country to Lake of the Woods, and northward into Patricia District. From there our survey will turn eastward through the hinterland to the Nipigon country, thence to the Quebec boundary, and southeast to the huge site at Bon Echo on Lake Mazinaw.

## *Quetico-Superior Country*

I have already mentioned setting up our base camp at French Lake in Quetico Provincial Park that first summer of 1957. A few days after arrival, an airlift via the Park "grub run" brought my son Kee and me to Basswood Lake at the south end of the Park. An hour later we were paddling north, heading for Agnes Lake via Summer, Sultry, and Silence lakes, along a route ringed by pencil marks on our map that indicated the likelihood of pictograph sites (p. 3).

My diary notes on July 9 that "We have now passed through two areas

marked on our maps for possible sites. There has been no sign of anything remotely resembling a pict." By noon of the following day we were out on Agnes Lake, heading south, our "hopes high, heightened by enormous cliffs on right—awesome overhang—magnificent colours." But alas: "We examined every cliff face minutely as we passed, from water-line as high as we could see, and no trace of pictos. . . . no pictos on the cliffs south-west of the Narrows. . . . One island was left. . . . Paddling around the east side we found a few



undistinguished-looking faces . . . and at the base of one the barest indication of a pictograph. Kee took three colour shots and I one b. & w. I measured and sketched it." So the first—and most unspectacular—site was recorded.

We paddled north again on Agnes, I with the sinking feeling that that year's exceptionally high water had covered all the sites but this. It was with dragging paddle-strokes that we explored a group of islands in the centre of the lake. Then we were suddenly staring at Site #2: fourteen symbols of varying strength in various shades of dull red. A bear, a canoe, and several hand smears were easy to identify. The rest were too abstract or amorphous, with one exception. The latter set our imaginations going in a way that makes me smile now, but also makes me less impatient with wild interpretations from the uninitiated. To my then untutored eyes it looked like a monk and a monster together in a boat. Since then I have seen variations on the same theme: in all likelihood two Maymaygwayshi in a canoe, with upraised arms. In this case I had yet to learn the subtle distinction of shade and colour between the Indian pigment and natural rust stains on the rock, and imagination did the rest.

With two sites figuratively under our belts we set out hopefully for

Williams Lake. This was the most definite report on our list. We had even seen photographs of the paintings. All reports but one agreed that they were on a sizable cliff at the west end. The exception placed it on a neighbouring unnamed lake. As the reader will have guessed we found that the minority report was right. Here we recorded three thunderbirds, a canoe, two simple abstractions, and a weird little moose. The next day we found our fourth site on the little unnamed lake between Agnes and Kawnipi.

The Neguagon Reserve on Lac la Croix, just west and south of Quetico Park, is only a few miles north of the pictographs on the big "Painted Rock." There I interviewed Charlie Ottertail, one of the few older Indians who still cherished his ancestors' ways and beliefs. The sun had set and the light was dim inside the Ottertail cabin. "A small dark room," to quote from my diary, "the frail but still vital Indian on the floor under a grey blanket, rising on one elbow to speak, sinking back between speeches . . . a lean intelligent face."

Yet there was little he knew about the pictographs: only that he was sure they had been there when the treaty of 1873 was signed.

For sheer naturalism there are no other paintings of moose that I have seen in the Shield country to compare



Site #4

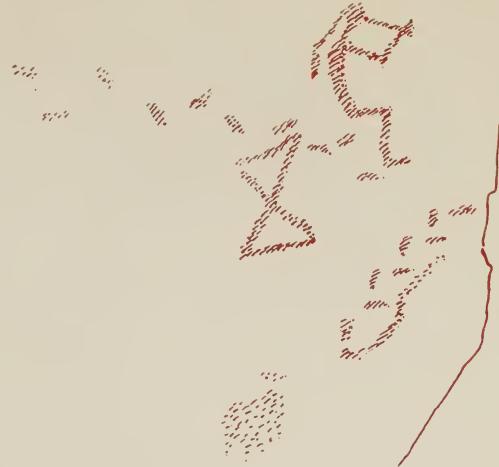


with the three on this site. All are surely by the same hand, as is the little antelope—or deer. Unique, too, are the pipe-smoking figures; one beside an hour-glass figure and tracks, the other not far from the initials "L.R. 1781."

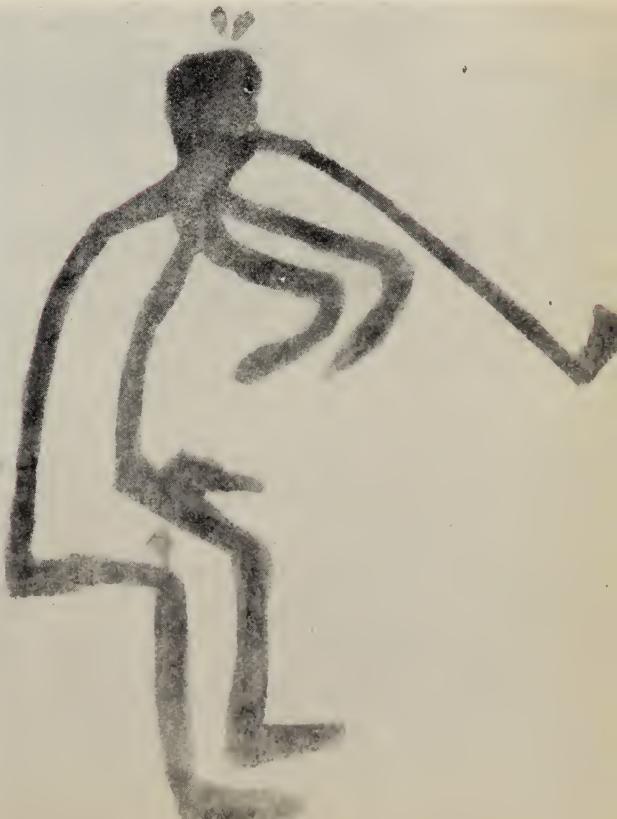
Each poses its mysteries.

Initials and date are pecked faintly into the hard granite. The *L* is coloured, seemingly with the identical pigment used for the pipe-smoker. The latter has the suggestion of a feather head-dress. Is it hair that is indicated on the other pipe-smoker? In Schoolcraft's glossary of pictograph symbols an hour-glass figure is interpreted as a "headless man." Yet Kohl, another early student of the Ojibwa, quotes an informant as saying: "If it were an easy matter . . . to guess what the signs mean they would soon steal our birchbark books. Hence all our ideas, thoughts and persons are represented in various mysterious disguises."

Many readers will already have some familiarity with the European cave paintings, notably those at Altamira and Lascaux. Merely a nodding acquaintance with these palaeolithic masterpieces makes it clear to an artist that their cultural milieu contrasted strongly with that of the Shield artists. Even the Lac la Croix moose lack the free-floating lines and flowing rhythms of the better cave paintings.



NOTE: pipe bowl in water colour reproduction is inaccurate; line drawing is more reliable. S.D.





*Opposite:*

Lac la Croix moose  
Face II

And while we can no more guess at the "caveman's" conscious purpose than we can at our own aborigine's, there can be no doubt about the pleasure the former took in most of the forms he chose to depict.

Paintings of hands are interpreted by Schoolcraft as "have done"; by Copway as a sign of death. Either way we might interpret the group of handprints at Lac la Croix that surround a small, but unmistakable fox as the record of a successful war party, led by a chief with either the personal or clan name of Fox. I still

*Opposite:*

Blindfold Lake site,  
Face II





like—but recognize as sheer conjecture—my translation of the extensive smearing of pigment below this group as saying in effect: “See what we have done with the blood of our enemies!”

It was from these smearings that I scraped samples of pigment for analysis in Toronto. The findings identified the pigment as ferric oxide, but the traces of organic material which would indicate the binder were so slight that carbon-dating was out of the question. On top of that there was no guarantee that the minute

quantities found did not represent stray material out of the air that had lodged accidentally on the surface of the paint. I am hoping eventually to find a slab of rock that has fallen from a site so that a microscopic study can be made of the pigment in relation to the rock grain, and to what extent and how permanently it bonds itself to the rock.

I have dubbed the pictographs illustrated above as the “Warrior Group” on the assumption that the half-length human figure is holding a weapon. Faint but fascinating material





is scattered over this face: a mound-like form, a caribou (or elk?) head, and the suggestion—too faint to be certain—of a human figure in a lodge.

I recorded this site in my first summer, and was still using the tedious techniques of string coordinates and chalking out grids, previously described. The northern faces here could be recorded from rocks underneath; but it was otherwise with the Warrior Group and the Fox Group, painted on a sheer face that rises overhead some thirty feet, and descends an estimated eight to ten feet underwater. Here they could only have been painted from the water, perhaps in early spring from the ice; more likely in summer from a canoe.

The day we recorded them a brisk south wind brought waves sweeping vigorously along the rock face. We had a rope along the base of the cliff

that gave us some control of the canoe, but my son Peter had also to make sure the canoe was not slapped against the rock. We had our hands full: he with paddle and rope, I with chalk and tape and sketch-book, while the water tossed us up and down and splashed my paper and colours with aggravating persistence.

The Lac la Croix site is in a magnificent setting: great blocks of the granite bedrock rising in steps above the water a hundred feet or more.

It is a mystery to me why not one mention in the literature has been found so far of a site on the main water route to the West, passed annually in the height of the fur-trade days by a thousand canoes.

The Crooked Lake site, on the Minnesota side of the border waters south of Quetico, *does* appear in the records, but on account of Sioux arrows stuck in a cleft high above



the water, mentioned by the explorer Mackenzie among others. Here, where Crooked Lake narrows imperceptibly into the lower Basswood River, a great bulk of granite leans ominously over the water, its walls streaked with a rich mosaic of iron stains, vari-coloured lichens, and vivid deposits of precipitated lime.

Here man's art is apt to be unnoticed, modestly appearing some fifty yards south of this colour display. Under one great overhang are the "Sturgeon in Net" illustrated on page 16, and nearby two horned figures. One of the latter is shown in half-tone on the opposite page. The other was so faint that I failed to notice it even while working on its neighbours.

Farther along is the "Eccentric Moose," with bell exaggerated into a sort of beard; nearby a bull moose beside a pelican (?). Another pelican appears beside an unusually deep canoe with a "medicine-flag" (?) at the bow (or stern). There is an elk here; and an elegant heron beside a disc. Most interesting of all, to me, is the tree beside the lodge, within the latter a "bird-man," which Kenneth Kidd suggests could be a shaman in a steam-bath ritual. This is the only recorded Shield pictograph that clearly portrays a plant form.

Cache Bay, an extension of Lake Saganaga at the southeast corner of Quetico, was the first site Peter and

*Opposite:*

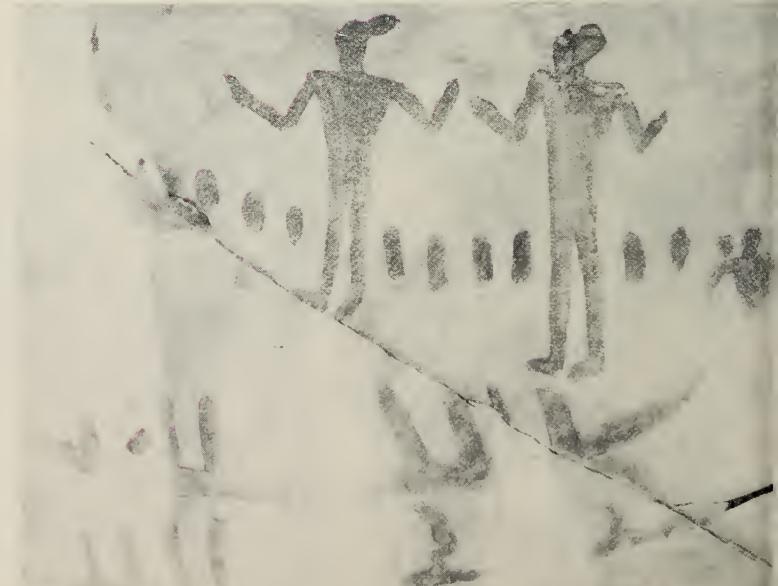
water colour  
reproductions  
of various  
Crooked Lake  
pictographs





Above:  
examples  
from  
Northern  
Lights Lake,  
Sites #13, #14

Right:  
Cache Bay  
group



I recorded in '58. Here is a pleasingly compact group of human figures, canoes, and tally marks tucked away in the heart of the curl of quiet water called Lily Pad Bay, on an inconspicuous rock far from the busy highway of the voyageurs to the south.

Farther east, on Northern Lights Lake, we recorded two other sites, one of them pin-pointed for us by Jock Richardson of Saginaga Trading Post. Allan Ruxton of Lands and Forests ferried us in. Site #14 is on a high rock visible across the bay. Note the way the moose's stack is rendered in the upper drawing. Site #13 faces a channel in Nelson Bay —a scattering of somewhat obscure symbols, obviously by another hand.

There are petroglyphs, too, at Cache Bay, reported by Gerry Payne and still waiting to be recorded.

Neither Kee nor I was impressed by the rocks we passed as we paddled



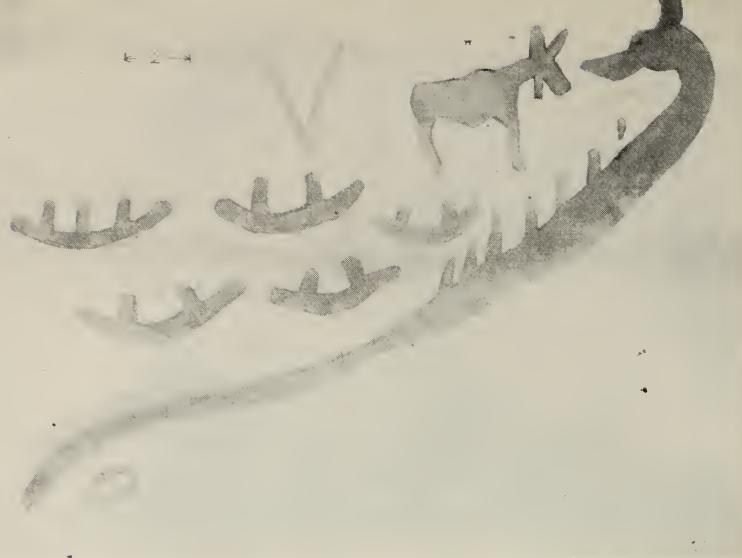
Darky Lake cow moose  
and calf. Note splayed  
hooves and dew-claws  
of cow's forefoot

south along the east shore of Darky Lake's southernmost arm. Coming to yet another rock, almost hidden by a grove of young birch trees, we looked up and gasped. High above the birches a great black overhang was poised. As we glided closer the screen of foliage moved aside and revealed, clear and startling, the "Heartless Moose" with a hole where her heart should have been, her bull calf following, the whole surrounded by tally marks, tracks, and a vertical row of discs.

Much else of interest was there: the half-figure of a man aiming what was surely a rifle, a group of canoes protected by a likely version of Misipizhiw, and another canoe beside a second serpentine form, painted across two cracks with typical disregard for the painting surface.

Since then the scouts at Moose Lake in Minnesota have reported





A likely Mishipizhiw at Darky Lake

another small site on the opposite shore that we had missed.

On the same trip that Kee and I recorded the Darky Lake site we paddled east to Agnes Lake, recording three minor sites that are not illustrated here. At the Narrows into Burt Lake we found extensive iron stains temptingly suggestive of an early Ford car! Nearby, however, were two genuine handprints and some other faded material. From there on we had no reports to search for, and were delighted to run across

two little moose on the waterway south of Hurlburt Lake. Finally, on the west shore of Agnes, just opposite the little island where we awaited our airlift, we found two painted rabbits, and nearby four animals that I judged to be Indian in origin: these pecked or pounded into the rock but so shallowly that we paddled past them without seeing them at first, although we knew they were there.

These are the only petroglyphs I have found to date on a vertical rock face. At Nett Lake, Cache Bay, Shoal

Darky Lake:  
man with gun,  
and projectile?



Lake, Sunset Channel on Lake of the Woods, and Footprint Lake there are other rock carvings, but all are cut into horizontal rock faces.

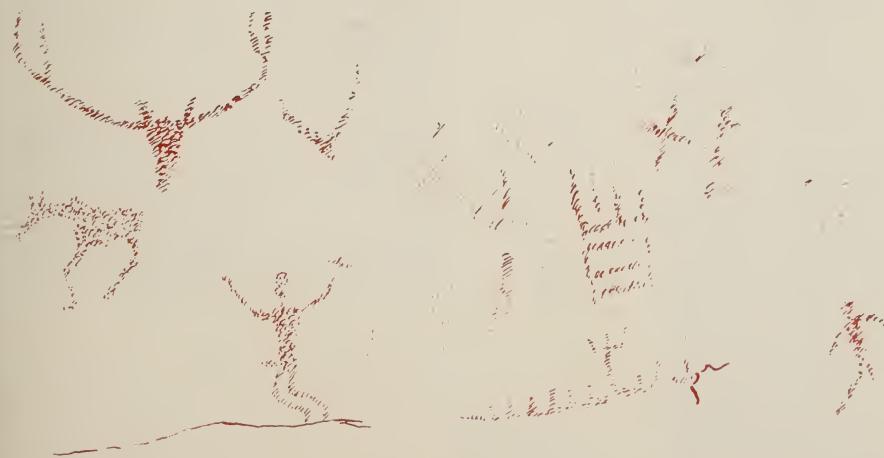
During my first summer in Quetico Park I heard vague rumours of a site on the northwest corner. In '58 Ernest Oberholtzer, naturalist and revered champion of conservation in the United States, told me in Ranier of a site on Quetico Lake. Later Lloyd Rawn of Lands and Forests at Fort Frances pin-pointed it for me. But it was not until '59 that Peter and I were able to hitch an airlift in to the Narrows to find the pictographs that are illustrated below. A beautifully clear group, under a low but bulky overhang, it contained a number of unusual features from the caribou (or elk) head, and one of the few human figures with its sex clearly indicated, to the long canoe in which one of the occupants appears to be standing with upright arms.

Experienced pictograph-hunters by now, we looked thoroughly along the rock faces to the east and west, and were rewarded with a second site, with two large and quite incomprehensible shapes. We finished the tracings to the distant throb of our Beaver, and I had barely focussed the camera for the first photograph when Art Colfer dropped out of the sky. I recall that trip as the one when Peter paid for our ride by spotting a thin wisp of smoke from a lightning fire far below. We circled twice before Art or I could spot it; and minutes later a radio-alerted crew was on its way from Park Headquarters to take care of it.

At least five minor sites remain to be recorded in Quetico Park, all small, but each with its contribution to make to our total knowledge.

Ely, Minnesota, is the small mining and tourist community through which is funnelled the amazing flood of

Quetico Lake,  
pictographs





Hegman Lake group

city-surfeited Americans who each summer head north into the roadless lake country of Superior National Forest, over the border into Quetico Park, and even beyond. University professors, garage mechanics, boy scouts, and harassed housewives in their thousands arrive in Ely; some with their own gear, some to get every article and item they need from the big canoe outfitters. Most of them leave mechanization behind and go in the hard way—by canoe.

Ely is the home of Sig Olson, bushman, scholar, conservationist, whose *Singing Wilderness* quietly and sensitively renders the essence of wilderness living. Here, too, lives Bill Trygg, ex-ranger, student of Indian lore, and champion of Indian rights. A few miles north on the shore of

Basswood Lake is the modest group of buildings that houses the Quetico-Superior Wilderness Research Center, where its Director, Clifford Ahlgren, is quietly building an international reputation for forestry research. Next door is Frank B. Hubachek, another passionate champion of conservation, a founder of the Research Center, and sponsor of many far-sighted wilderness research projects on both sides of the border. Sig Olson was among the first to bring the Shield pictographs to the Royal Ontario Museum's attention; Bill Trygg tracked down an obscure site on Island River in the heart of Superior National Forest; and "Hub" has warmly supported the pictograph recording project since its inception.

The Hegman Lake site is perhaps the most photogenic of all I have recorded. A small, well-designed group, it is painted in strong colour against a lighter-than-usual granite background. Here was the first site I had encountered that was well above the water: a somewhat awkward one to record, for Peter and André Vallières, his French-Canadian friend who was with us that summer, had to hold me by the shirt-tails so that I could lean out far enough from the rock face to focus the camera. Note the splayed hooves and dew claws of the moose which we have seen only once before, on the Darky Lake site.

As we left, André pointed out a huge, detached slab of granite below the pictures that gave forth a dull hollow sound when tapped with a rock.

On the west shore of Burntside Lake, only a short drive west of Ely,



Burntside Lake warriors

young Jim Anderson showed me a most unusual site, on a small face screened from the lake by a healthy growth of trees.

"This," I remarked in my notes, "is the curiosest to date. . . . The colour is clearly different from all others and also its manner of application. One gets the impression of a dye rather than a pigment, applied with a small stiff brush . . . [some] lines have a sharp, clear edge, even where the rock is rough."

The colour was a dull wine-gray, The style, too, was different: a little group of fighting figures with bows and arrows; another group that seemed to be dancing; a head with eyes, nose, mouth, and a Plains type of head-dress. Most astonishing of all was a tiny abstraction of a moose, a masterpiece of condensation. Here, surely, close to the southern edge of the Shield, we see the influence of an impinging culture.

A short air-hop east of Ely through the courtesy of the U.S. Forest Service

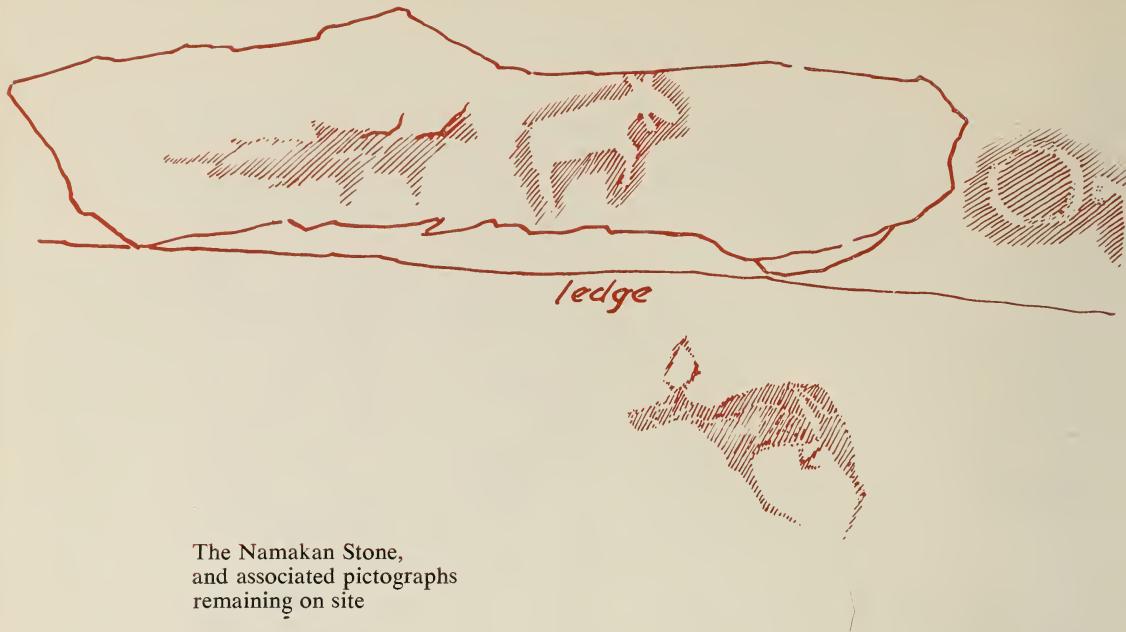
Center brought me to Site #17 on a widening of Kawashiwi River. Of much that was fragmentary and obscure the symbol reproduced here stood out clear though faint. An Ojibwa on nearby Tower Reserve called it a "rocking-chair"—and laughed! A Red Lake (Ontario) Ojibwa was sure that it represented a deadfall trap.

It was a long winding lumber road that took my wife and me, guided by Bill Trygg, to the Island River in the heart of Superior National Forest. Here on an imposing block of gabbro we found a small cross, and a barely discernible handprint.

Earlier, with a piece of weathered haematite, Bill had demonstrated his ingenious theory of how the pictographs were painted. Chalking a line on a granite boulder with the ore, he wet his finger and broadened the stroke to a strong, clear finger-width.

Kawashiwi  
River, south  
of Alice Lake





The Namakan Stone,  
and associated pictographs  
remaining on site

### Border Lands West

Between the Quetico-Superior area and Lake of the Woods the border country pictographs thin out. In Minnesota no more rock paintings have shown up west of Hegman Lake. But there are rock carvings on Spirit Island in Nett Lake, a shallow body of water with hundreds of acres of wild rice in the heart of a thriving Indian community. Scattered over the flat rock along the north shore are dozens of figures pecked into the glacially polished rock.

On the Canadian side of Namakan Narrows, and on a nearby island of Namakan Lake, I recorded three sites in 1958. My wife and I with our seven-year-old Christopher paddled in from the east end of Rainy Lake. Our objective: a site mentioned by a

United States geologist, Joseph Norwood. Conspicuous on the Canadian shore of the Narrows is a serpent-like vein of white feldspar, against a background of dark schist. Norwood, to borrow a quotation from Grace Lee Nute's *The Voyageur's Highway*, said of this that it "must be highly esteemed by them, from the quantity of vermilion bestowed on it, and the number of animals depicted on the face of the rock." This report, made in 1849, is the earliest printed comment I have yet found on a specific Shield site.

Earlier that summer we had driven from Ely to Crane Lake on the American side, in an attempt to track down persistent rumours of a site on that lake. The reports were well founded, but in an unexpected way.

At north entrance,  
Namakan  
Narrows



At Arthur Pohlman's place I stared in undisguised amazement at a slab of rock from the Namakan site leaning against the wall of his garage: painted on it a *white* moose and a red fish-like form. Pohlman and his brother-in-law, Dr. J. A. Bolz, author of *Portage into the Past*, had found the 100-pound slab in imminent danger of falling into the water, had rescued it, and were only too happy to accept my offer to deliver it to the Royal Ontario Museum. There the Namakan Stone now rests.

The opposite page shows the way in which the stone, *in situ*, relates to the neighbouring pictographs. White pigment was also used on the peculiar symbols to the right. It looks as if the artist ran out of pigment or was interrupted while painting the large-eared moose (?) below. Whatever the interruption, it revealed his procedure in painting a large area.

Paintings on a rough granite wall around the corner are very simple—a canoe, stick figures, crosses—all badly weathered.

At the north end of the Narrows, Site #23 is painted under a wide overhang on a rock so dark that a black and white photograph would show nothing. A curious group, that seems to have a story to tell. I could not decide whether the moose's head had scaled off or had never been painted.

Site #25 is on an eight-foot wall of rock on a small island near Berger's fish camp. Visiting Mrs. Berger we found a grand old pioneer woman baking cookies for her grandchildren. She showed us hundreds of artifacts picked up on neighbouring sands during low water in the spring. The whole east end of Namakan Lake must once have been an Indian paradise.

Where Namakan waters pour into Rainy Lake we found some pigment

Site on Namakan Lake island





stains on a facing rock, but nothing we could call a site. Nor in a circuit of Rainy Lake on another occasion were we able to find any paintings on the south or east shores of Rainy.

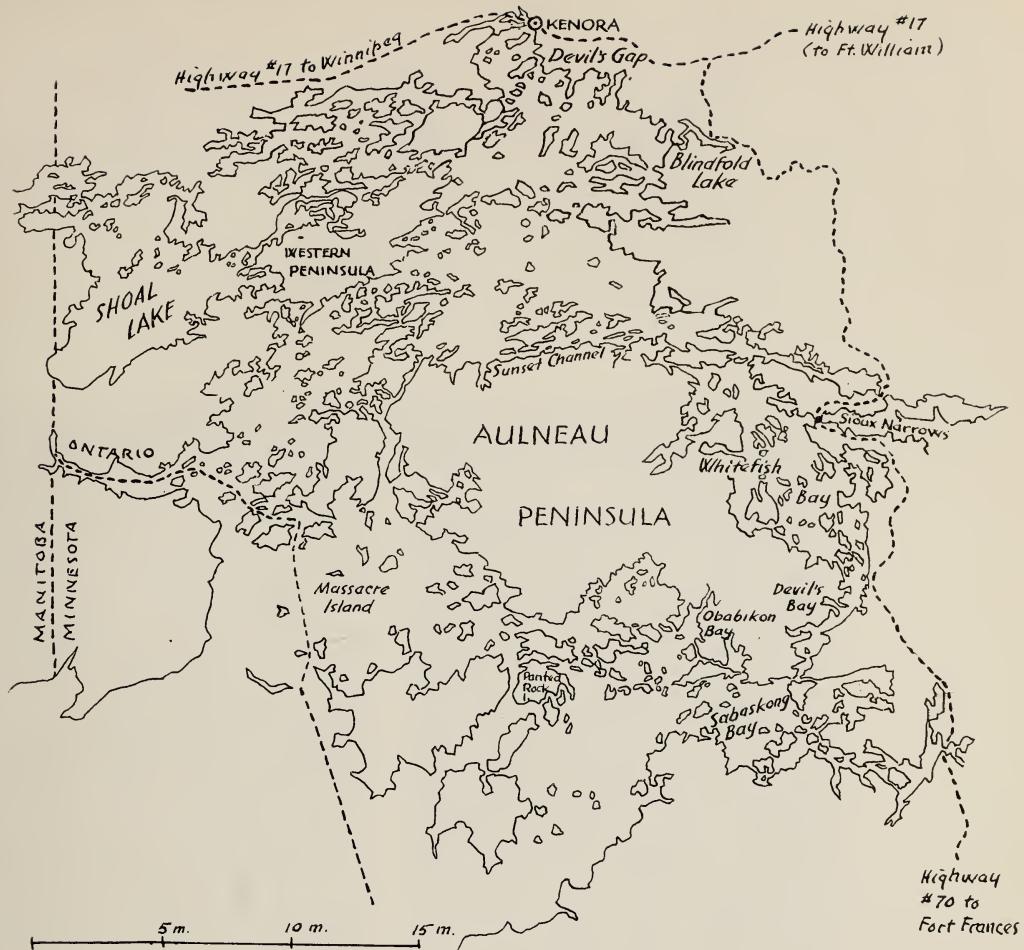
Here in the Rainy Lake area, and along the Rainy River, evidence can be found of thousands of years of human occupation. Almost every amateur collection of artifacts in the country includes at least two or three projectile points from the Old Copper culture. At Pither's Point Walter Kenyon, digging for the Royal Ontario Museum in an ancient mound, found a copper fish-hook 5,000 years old.

Only a few miles east of Fort Frances is the Painted Narrows site, on a small island near the railway causeway. Among a number of large and very faint paintings appears the group illustrated here: an upside-down canoe, a human figure, three detached heads(?), and two weird composite figures, both with three feet. The more central of these is a perfect example of the type of strange linear figures suggestive of human or animal forms, but with dream-like appendages and projections that give them an altogether incomprehensible character. As far as I know these are unique to the Shield pictographs.

Such groupings as this and those we have already seen at Darky Lake and Cache Bay seem to have a storytelling purpose—perhaps here the record of a drowning.

#### *Lake of the Woods*

When the Lake of the Woods has been combed as thoroughly as the Quetico-Superior country the picto-



graph scores for the two regions should stand about even. To date I have recorded thirteen rock painting sites, two petroglyph sites and one lichenoglyph, the term I have coined for pictographs scraped in lichen-coated rock.

Whitefish Bay is properly a lake in its own right, once regarded as such by the Indians. Here half the sites are concentrated. My second purely arbitrary division takes in the lake north and west of Aulneau Peninsula;

and the lake south of Aulneau forms the third.

According to some historians, the Siouan-speaking Assiniboines were migrating out of this area into the prairies from A.D. 1700 on, under pressure from the Algonkian-speaking Ojibwa, who have occupied the lake since the mid-eighteenth century.

It is a curious fact that the two sites I found the most difficult to locate on the whole lake were among the few in all of Canada to be listed



Left:  
Sunset  
Channel



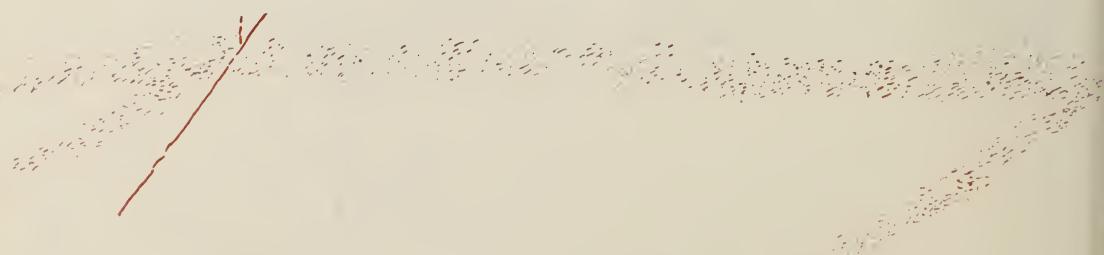
Right:  
Picture Rock  
Point

by Mallory, probably by way of Lawson, who has left us partial records of them.

By the third summer our expedition had become almost completely mechanized, depending more and more on motorboat and aircraft. In this case, though the Lands and Forests transported us to a camp-site on Sunset Channel, the locations were so vague that we took to the canoe, my wife and two sons adding three pairs of eyes to scan the shores. The first day we circumnavigated innumerable islands north of Sunset Channel, and would have been utterly discouraged but for a visit to an isolated fish camp where the fisherman told us of markings on a reef just south of the Channel. After supper that evening Irene suggested that we paddle along the shore of Cliff Island, to which we had already given some attention, just to double-check. A few miles from camp we found the group of paintings shown here.

The petroglyph site was easy to find from there; Mallory had placed it half a mile east of the paintings, and as soon as we saw the fisherman's reef at the end of the half mile we knew we had found it. This book does not cover the rock carving sites but I might remark in passing that the characters were quite different from those at Nett Lake. On Machin's point in Shoal Lake the next year I recorded further petroglyphs and pinpointed a third site northwest of Rainy Lake for a future visit.

The paintings on Picture Rock Point, Western Peninsula, are painted on a thick, rough encrustation of lime, and, with the exception of the human figure, are obscure. But here, as on most other Lake of the Woods sites, we found offerings on a water-lapped ledge: neatly folded clothing and a towel, topped by a little pile of tobacco. There were offerings, too, in a crack below the equally modest site at Portage Bay, a few miles west.





South of Aulneau Peninsula I have so far recorded only two rock painting sites. Of these the pictographs on Painted Rock Island are well known, situated as they are on the boat channel between that island and Split Rock. Sheer luck brought us to the Obabikong Channel site.

In the summer of '60 fires were so prevalent that it was an imposition to ask for help from the harassed staff of Lands and Forests. So I turned to Bill Fadden of Sioux Narrows, an experienced guide and old-timer, who took to pictograph-hunting with all the enthusiasm of a young archaeologist. Stopping over at Sioux Narrows on my way west I enlisted his help in tracking down three sites in Whitefish Bay; on my return two weeks later he had discovered three others.

Speeding up the channel from Sabaskong Bay into Obabikong Bay we caught a glimpse of red through the trees rather high up on the east shore. On shore, expecting to find

another example of iron stains, we were happily astonished to discover the paintings shown here: two serpentine figures, one with antlers, the other with horns, symmetrically facing a large turtle. To the left, rather crudely painted on very rough granite, was a serpent fifteen feet long, with open mouth, ears, and three large flippers—a veritable Ogopogo.

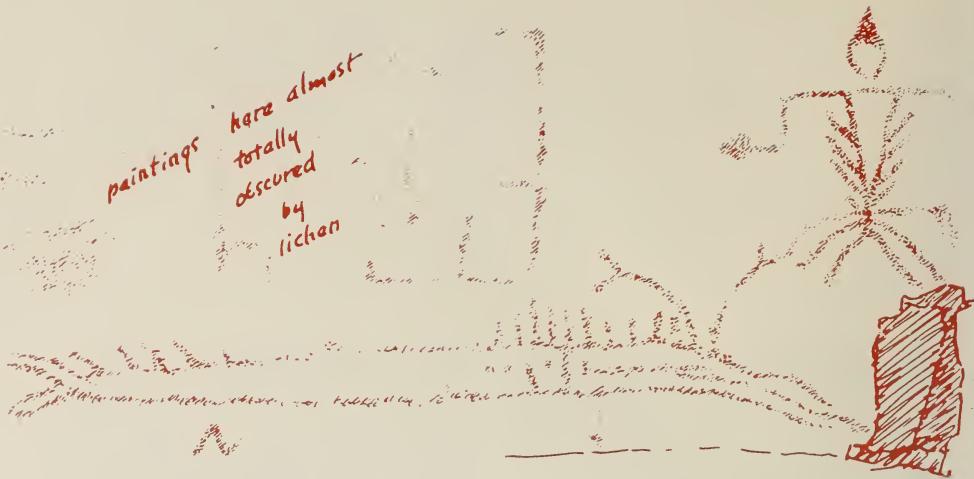
A deep cleft between the ledge we stood on and the rock wall was almost filled with dirt and rubble. Lying on the ground were an ancient, weathered overcoat, and various rags that had rotted beyond recognition.

Northward, in Obabikong Narrows, is a lichenoglyph on a boulder, a devil-face that raises interesting questions about the original of the non-Indian painted face at the Devil's Gap, near Kenora.

The Painted Rock Island site is on a rock that projects from the slope of the surrounding shore like a great flat-roofed dormer window. Here was



paintings here almost  
totally obscured  
by lichen



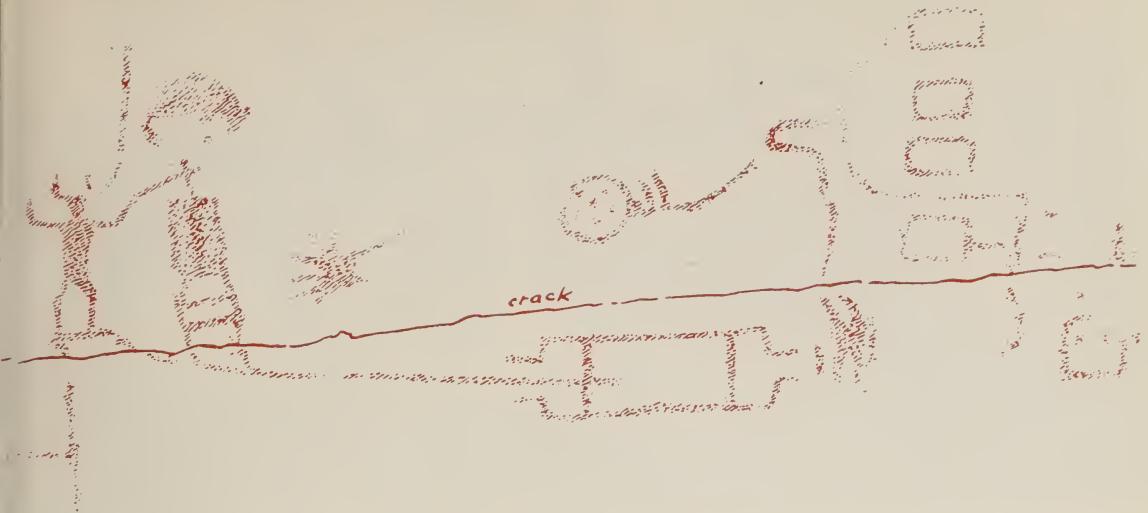
one of the few sites that faced directly north, and, as one would expect, was extensively overgrown with lichen. Fortunately most of this was fairly easy to scrub off with vigorous sponging. We found no trace of any offerings here.

This is the one site that might be related in form and apparent content to the Miday birchbark scrolls. The sacred bear stands above a rectangular structure beside a horned figure, who might represent a powerful Miday leader. A line leads directly to the typical drawing of a Miday lodge. To the right may be seen an elaborate layout of rectangular forms with "paths" from some to others.

Far to the left, badly obscured by lichen and weathering, are other suggestions of lodges or enclosures. In the centre a weird abstraction suggests a more than human form. Finally, to the lower left, floats a horned serpent-sturgeon, with projecting spines the length of its back. A most unusual painting!



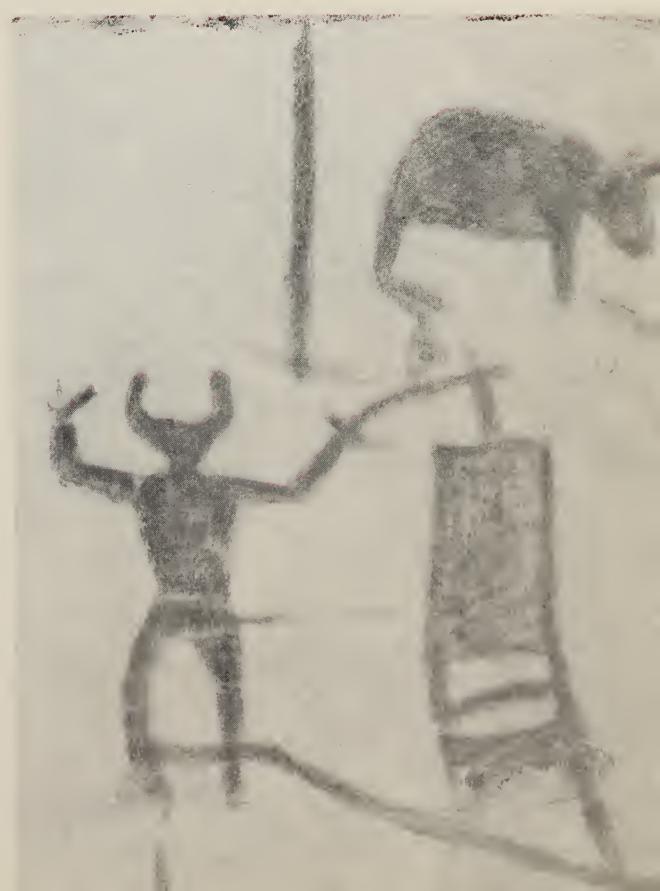
Painted Rock Island,  
detail of figure



It was an awkward site to record. We ran ropes down from trees high up on the shore at either end of the rock, and so secured the ends of a long, heavy pole that I could use as a rough scaffold from which to work. If I had been the original artist I should have preferred to paint this from my canoe at a time when the water was six or eight feet higher.

One item an intensive dating study might include is the variation in water levels of the larger lakes. Here, on international waters, there should be records going back a century or more, that might suggest at least a minimal possible date. Since even now there is evidence of continuing practice of the old ways among the Lake of the Woods Indians some paintings might be relatively recent. Yet the evidence of pigment erosion and lichen growth here suggest that this site is one of the older, rather than the more recent ones.

I have deliberately left the most fascinating of the Lake of the Woods



Painted Rock Island,  
detail of figure

sites to the last: the cluster of seven sites in Whitefish Bay. Here the master designer of water labyrinths, after trying his hand at Quetico and elsewhere, got down to work on his magnum opus. Even old-timers stick to the channels they know; and some of the younger Indian guides have been known to get confused.

The Blindfold site, some miles north of the Bay but on the same side of the lake, I had known as a boy. Bruce and Dorothy Johnston, summer campers from Winnipeg, had sent me, via the Museum, the location and a description of the Sioux Narrows site. But rumours and reports from various sources of at least two of the other sites gave only the vaguest locations, and I am quite sure that without Bill Fadden's knowledge of the bay and keen interest in hunting for sites I should still be looking for at least a couple of them.

Strangely, few residents, summer or permanent, knew of these paintings. Actually, unless one is paddling, or drifting in an outboard motorboat, the passerby has a poor chance of seeing anything interesting along the shore. It is a sad commentary on our holiday habits that speed has become such a mania that we are denying ourselves some of the greatest pleasures to be found in such waters, not least the thrill of rediscovering for oneself these mystifying remnants of prehistory.

Yet I keep reminding myself that as a boy at the Blindfold site, inter-

ested though I was in the Indian past even then, it was the offerings I saw on the ledge below that stayed in my memory. Perhaps the very incomprehensibility of these paintings tends to close off our interest. Certainly the Blindfold paintings are as difficult to read as any others.

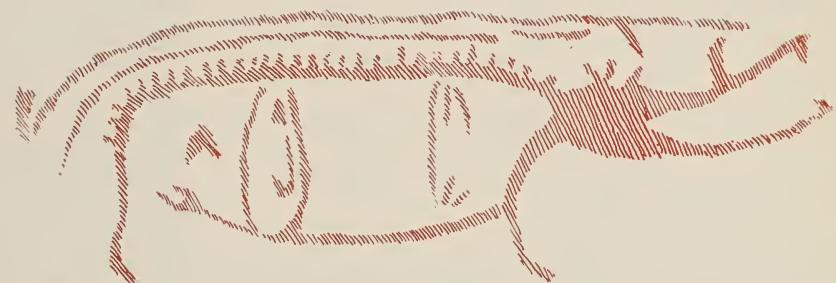
What, for instance, is the affair on a tripod to the lower left? A drum? If so, it is quite unlike the Indian drums we know of today. In the centre (not illustrated here) is a crude little moose, whose forebody has almost disappeared under seepage that may offer a dating clue. On the extreme right of this face a monstrous form beneath two upturned canoes suggests the sinister Mishipizhiw.

The real interest, however, centres in the symmetrical grouping shown on the opposite page. A moose, undoubtedly, on the left. But what kind of a creature do we see on the right?

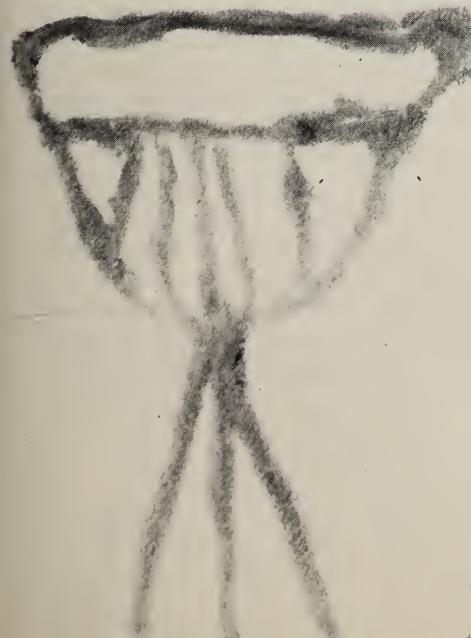
I could not resist the temptation of placing underneath this creature one recorded in the Lake Baikal region of south-central Siberia by A. P. Okladnikov, a U.S.S.R. archaeologist who has made extensive studies of rock paintings and carvings in Eurasia. The finger-painting technique, the curious protuberance on the snout, and the crested back all provide an amazing coincidence of conception and execution. It would be ridiculous, of course, to assume even the most tenuous of cultural links.

About three miles southeast of Sioux Narrows Post Office, facing





A drum?



After Okladnikov,  
recorded in the  
Lake Baikal region

Mishipizhiw?



An early European fort?

left  
edge  
of  
lichen



west at the northern end of a bulky outcrop of granite is Site #28. Big blocks of rock-fall at the base of the site gave me a footing for the recording work, as they probably did originally for the painting.

The drawing in the top left margin is surely an Indian's impression of an early European fort, such as La Vérendrye may have built on Massacre Island. How else can one interpret the flag, with a ball on top of the mast, and the suggestion of a pattern on the flag itself? The triangular pennant flying from the mast of an unusually deep and heavy-looking "canoe" strongly reinforces this impression of an intruding culture.

On Face II we see handprints, a small man beside a serpent-monster, the latter with jaws and fore-flipper, and what appears to be a deer in a canoe. That the latter is not so strange a concept to the Indian as it might be to others is demonstrated in birchbark pictographs illustrated and interpreted in Densmore's *Chippewa Customs*. Here two families are shown, each in its own canoe. In the one a large bear is followed by three small ones, with a catfish in the stern. In the other three eagles are followed by a bear. The animals represent the clan of each person, the children inheriting their father's clan. It is interesting to note that the old Indian fashion, now disappeared, was for the head of the family to take the bow position, as a hunter logically would.

I recorded this site in the summer of '58. Two years later, on the way to greener fields with Bill Fadden, I stopped off as we passed it to take further photographs. In the interval

since my last visit someone had placed some clothing, a bundle of sticks, and tobacco on the rocks at the base. The sticks were thumb-thick, peeled, and daubed with red and blue paint. What could they mean?

While I was out west, Bill made enquiries of the local Ojibwa and was told that these bundles were placed on the rocks with clothing and tobacco when someone was sick, different colours being placed on the sticks for different illnesses.

We found similar "prayer-sticks" on three other Whitefish Bay sites and nowhere else. Are these a survival of an ancient practice, or the result of a recent cult among the quite numerous non-Christian Indians of the area? So far as I know no other instances of this practice have been observed. In Shoal Lake, where Presbyterian Christianity is dominant, only one Indian had heard of the practice, and seemed not too well informed about its significance. Much remains to be learned here.

If I had had any doubts about the connection between the pictographs and the offerings, they were resolved at the three other sites. In the Devil's Bay site, the Annie Island site, and the one just south of Devil's Bay, the offerings were always directly below the pictographs, as here.

Bill Fadden had also been told that there were always just forty prayer-sticks. In the two sites where the bundle was intact this was true; in the others the binding string had rotted and some of the sticks had floated away in the water. Bill also remembered seeing an old Indian in a bark canoe with his family many



*Above, and on opposite page:  
Face II of Sioux Narrows site*

years ago flinging water with his paddle on the rock at the Devil's Hole and talking loudly, as if to an unseen person.

The site on the northeast point of Hayter Peninsula had a different kind of surprise to offer—two, in fact. The

first was a new kind of symbol, which from its obvious resemblance to a checker-board I was inclined to eye suspiciously. Yet it was in the authen-



Undeciphered paintings  
25 feet above the water,  
Hayter Peninsula site

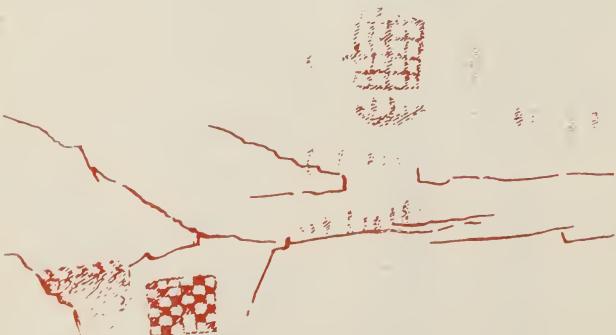
tic colour, and the squares were filled in an irregular fashion. Had the two appeared in a European cave they might have been dubbed "tectiforms." They do suggest, for what it may be worth, a weaving texture. Here there were no prayer-sticks; but an old china cup and other odds and ends were visible in a horizontal crack nearby.

Our recording work done, I was just packing cameras and kit when I noticed that Bill was still scanning the rocks. It was a novel experience to work with someone more anxious than I to find another pictograph. Bill pointed to a rock that stood above and back from the waterside face we had been working at. A most unpromising place; I gave it only a careless glance.

"Would that be anything up there?" Bill wanted to know, pointing to a rusty stain halfway up the other face. A couple of hand and toeholds took me up easily enough—and there was another group of paintings!

Whoever had painted them must have had some difficulty, or have been very short-sighted; for to lean far enough out to focus on the rock, standing on a mere bit of a ledge, one needed both hands. Fortunately Peter was along that day, and we had lots of rope. Bill anchored the rope at the top of the cliff, and Peter, with a bowline around his shoulders, had both hands free to work on the tracings and photographs as I handed up the materials from below.

At the north end of Annie Island we almost missed the sole but fascinating pictograph on a beautiful granite wall: a vertical zig-zag of



finger-width colour that ended in the head of a Maymaygwayshi. Among the rocks below, like a shorebird's nest, we found another deposit of clothing, prayer-sticks, and tobacco, all as fresh as if they had been put there yesterday. Small wonder that we nearly missed the painting, for the wall was streaked with black lichen whose edges were scalloped in rhythm with the undulations of the pictograph, offering perfect camouflage.

The same day that we recorded these two sites we hunted high and low for a site in Devil's Bay. It was a beautiful day and we found the obvious rock, but though we scanned and scanned there was nothing on it. Two weeks later we returned and found it immediately in the centre of the self-same rock, very faint but clear. So much for the effect of glare on visibility!

Apart from being somewhat larger than any thunderbird hitherto recorded, there was nothing too notable about this site.

I have yet to learn why Devil's Bay is so named. Yet in Sabaskong Bay there is a small rocky island in the centre of which is a huge "nest" of boulders, obviously an artifact—though a laborious one—and the island is named Devil Birdsnest Island. Indians as far east as Lake Nipigon refer to such constructions as "Thunderbird's Nests." I have heard of others, but this is the only one I've seen.

The Devil's Hole is no more than a deep, almost horizontal fissure, averaging about five inches in width, in the granite outcrop just north of Devil's Bay on the west shore of the

Devil's Bay  
thunderbird



Annie Island  
site, associated  
with "prayer sticks"



### Devil's Hole Faces Ib and III

southern arm of Whitefish. The adjacent paintings seem to be merely smears, except for one small abstraction. Some seventy feet farther south is a far more interesting group: a series of large abstractions that have an unusual consistency of style and dimensions, but leave the viewer clueless. In the fissure, I ought to add, which goes farther back than the eye can see, are traces of offerings, fragments of chinaware, and so on.

By far the most interesting feature of Site # 99, just south of Devil's Bay, is the bison. In the summer of '58 I got wind of a site on Mameigwess Lake said to have a buffalo represented on it. Though it was off my itinerary I drove in from Highway 17 west of Ignace to have a look at it, arriving at Jorgensen's

camp in a heavy rain. The Jorgensens not only treated us to lunch but lent us their boat and heavy slickers to run across the lake to the site.

In driving rain, with little shelter from the overhangs, Klaus Prufer and I photographed the main features. It was disappointing to find on my return to do a proper recording job the next summer that what we had taken for bison on our first visit was actually a moose.

The first unmistakable bison I found painted on a rock was far to the north, on the Bloodvein River. Here on Whitefish Bay, and a bare hundred miles east of bison country was another. This is not as accurate a drawing as the Bloodvein Bison, but more alive. Another seems to have been painted to its left, but it

### Devil's Hole, Face Ia





Whitefish Bay bison  
(see also page 96)

is impossible to tell whether rock erosion or deliberate distortion accounts for the peculiar neck and head.

Two animal forms and a baker's dozen of handprints make up the other markings. On a ledge below was a most handsome offering with prayer-sticks. We carefully lifted one corner of the neatly piled clothing to find that it was all clean and in good repair. No attempt had been made to foist off second-rate articles on the mysterious healers.

An impressive armada sailed from Sioux Narrows on August 8, 1959: the flagship, a big Lands and Forests diesel, bearing myself, Irene, and Christopher, following the Johnstons

who had pin-pointed the site earlier in the summer, and a third high-powered motor launch bearing American friends. An hour later the flotilla lay to in a maze of islands in the centre of Whitefish Bay, completely "at sea." Nevertheless we finally made our way through the labyrinth to the most remarkable site of the summer, on appropriately named Picture Rock Island, which we mistakenly identified at the time as Fergus Island.

For individuality of setting this was supreme—an eagle's eyrie rather than an artist's easel, fifty feet and more above the lake. The red of the paintings is clearly visible 500 yards away.



Then, as one approaches, the red disappears behind the lip of a twenty-foot-wide ledge.

Looking up that day the place seemed inaccessible; a sheer drop to the water protected that approach completely and there was no way down from the top. However, with the will there proved to be a circuitous way, and the biggest difficulty was in getting water up for the tracings.

On Face I the turtle, unusually naturalistic compared with others elsewhere, is clear and strong. The undulating form in the centre, which may have lost significant details under the lichen, repeats a theme that occurs with variations on six other sites—notably the Annie Island site we have just looked at. The ladder-like form and the handprints are said by some non-Indians in the locality to refer to a raid on Ladder Lake by the "Red Hand," a band of marauding Indians in Minnesota in the 1880's or 90's. On Face II the reversed brackets with vertical bar between is a form that will be seen again at Red Rock and Pictured Lake. Is the animal canine, with the Samoyed tail of an Eskimo dog? If so, it is very recent, for the only dog known to the early natives hereabout was a small hunting animal. Yet it may not be a dog at all; we have already seen how readily, for reasons unknown to us, natural forms could be distorted.

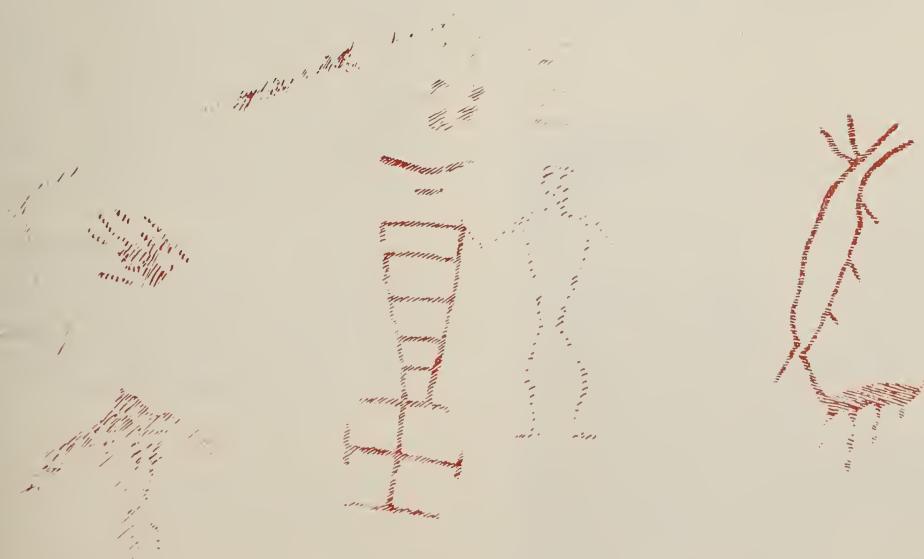
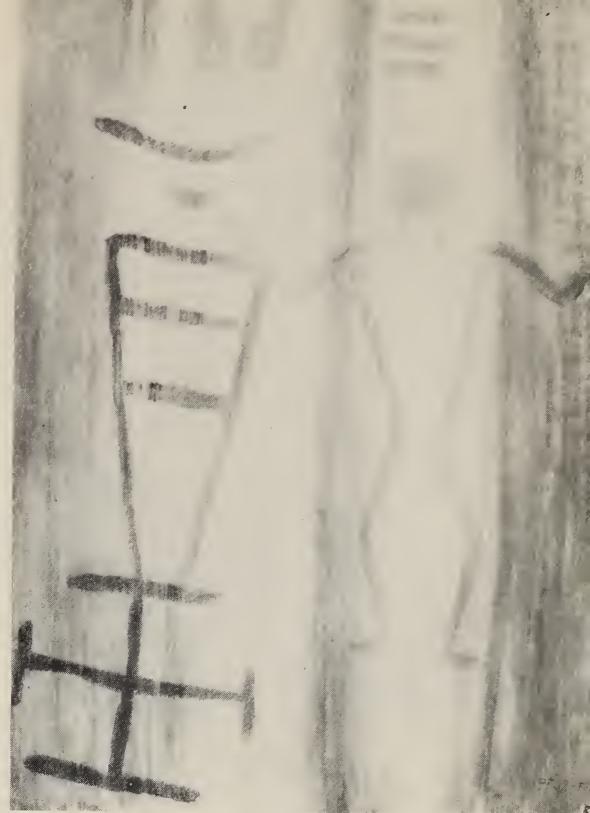
A child's handprint appears among the others—or is it simply a small painted hand? On this site it is difficult to tell whether the hands were printed or painted. I can offer no comment on the baffling form at the centre right.

Face III has three exceptional forms. The lower left figure seems intended for a bird: note the suggestion of feather tips on the wings. The ladder-Maltese-cross character in the centre and the seeming combination of two abstracted animal forms on the right are typical Shield abstractions. But the faint, lime-obscured human figure is almost a brother to the central figure at Blind-fold, and shares with half a dozen others the artist's curious disinclination to close off the lower part of the body.

It should also be mentioned that the rock itself is most unusual: a smooth concave curve of glacially sculptured granite. The pigment seems indissolubly bonded to the rock—for how long is anybody's guess.

#### *Northwestern Hinterland*

The arbitrary division we have made between western and northwestern hinterlands follows the northern line of the C.N.R. through Minaki, Sioux Lookout, and Arm-



strong. Although each year roads snake their way farther north of this line into the untouched wilderness, quick access has been almost entirely restricted to air travel. Of an estimated total of sixty important sites in the region only a third have been recorded. The whole vast area is currently administered, for forest protection, wild-life study and control, and so on, from Sioux Lookout. Fires raging in this area during the summers of 1960 and '61 have made airlifts for other purposes impossible, and all we have in the pages that follow is a sampling of the total, most of them collected during the summer of 1959.

In the neighbouring Shield country of northern Manitoba I already have the same scattering of reports that prefaced the finding of many others in Ontario. A brief reconnaissance trip I made to Lac la Ronge in northern Saskatchewan tells the same story. Much remains to be done.

The northernmost reported site in Ontario is north of the fifty-fourth parallel on the Sachigo River, near Manitoba, a site I paddled past unknowingly on a trip with my father

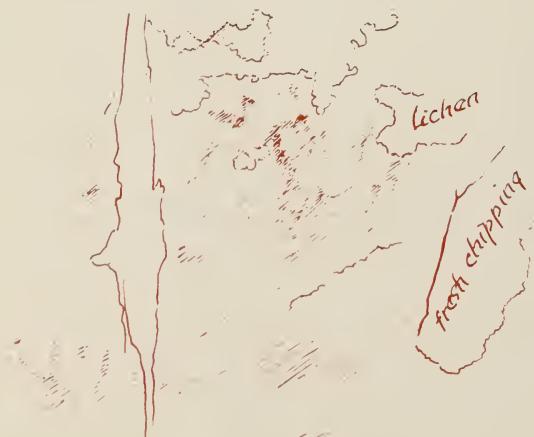
in 1928. This site and four others were reported by Edward Rogers, anthropologist at the Royal Ontario Museum, who with his linguistically gifted wife, Jean, spent the better part of a year with an Ojibwa band in the Round Lake area. Farther south I owe John Macfie of Lands and Forests the locations of a dozen sites from Artery Lake to the Vermilion River. Finally, the ubiquitous McInnes turned up sites at Cliff and Route Lakes.

One of the luckiest breaks I had in the summer of '59 was the chance to fly with Jake Siegel, the Lands and Forests pilot at Red Lake. A superb flyer with a widespread reputation for fire protection, he was the first man I've met who literally wouldn't hurt a fly; Peter and I saw him carefully herd one, trapped in the take-off, across the windshield with his hand to the open window—and freedom! For such a man the fire that destroyed millions of living creatures was a personal enemy. The following year on the evening of my arrival at Red Lake I learned that he had made twenty-five separate flights that day, carrying in men and supplies.

I should make it clear that I could only get airlifts by prearrangement with headquarters, and only then if a Beaver aircraft were going in the same general direction that I needed to go, on an assigned fire patrol or fire tower grub run.

The great advantage of pictograph hunting by aircraft is that in a single circling of a lake one can spot every likely outcrop, and unstrap one's canoe fifty feet from the likeliest, saving hours of shore exploration.

#### Cochrane River Face VI



Of the nine faces on the Cochrane River site, a few miles north of Deer Lake, and the most northerly site I have so far recorded in Ontario, all but the first, fourth, and fifth show only vestigial traces and are not illustrated here. It is a pity that this site is so remote. Faces VA and VB offer almost the full range of dating clues: over-painting, lichen-encroachment, exfoliation, and a wide range of pigment intensities and hues.

The most interesting drawing is the winged figure, unfortunately obscured on the right side of the head by chipping. A bird with a human head? Was the head originally symmetrical, with the appendages on either side representing a special hairdo? Whether so or not, we shall find two human figures on the Bloodvein River site that suggest the same idea.

While at nearby Deer Lake waiting for the plane to pick us up I spent two hours interviewing John Meezis, one of the older Indians, and a third hour at the school. The summer teacher, Miss Todd, let me take charge of her seventeen children (ages six to fifteen) for a drawing experiment. The great majority, when asked to draw a moose, a fish, a bird, and a man, produced what any other Canadian schoolchild might have drawn. But four of the older children drew female figures as hour-glass forms with appended head and limbs; and three of the four drew the arms in a surrender position.

The Bloodvein River site was one of those rare experiences that are the supreme reward of pictograph-hunting. Here, some eighty miles northwest of Red Lake, in the Lake



Cochrane River  
pictographs



Winnipeg water-shed, was a beautifully proportioned bison, and a human figure with the most detail I have yet recorded.

There was much else beside: the two curious "wrigglers" on Face I, the canoe on Face II with figures in the same manner as on Lake Nipigon and far to the south at Site #2 on Agnes Lake in Quetico Park. Face III is a puzzling conglomeration of over-painting and abstractions in which little can be deciphered. I would guess that the animal on the upper left is a porcupine.

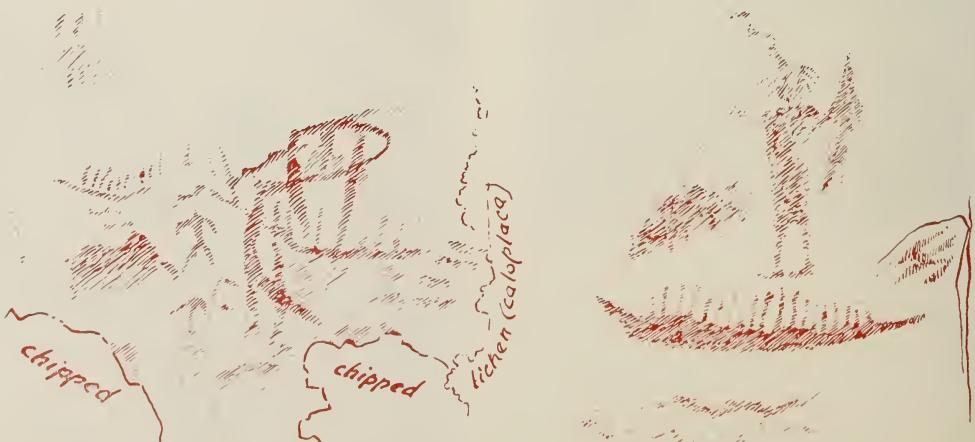
The northern exposure was unexpected, and the question arises how the rock came to be lichen-free at the time it was chosen for a site. Peter and I scrubbed off whole yards of the fuzzy green species that had grown over a good half of the paintings.

Note the hair-do on the little man on Face II, very like that on the Cochrane River "Eagle-man."

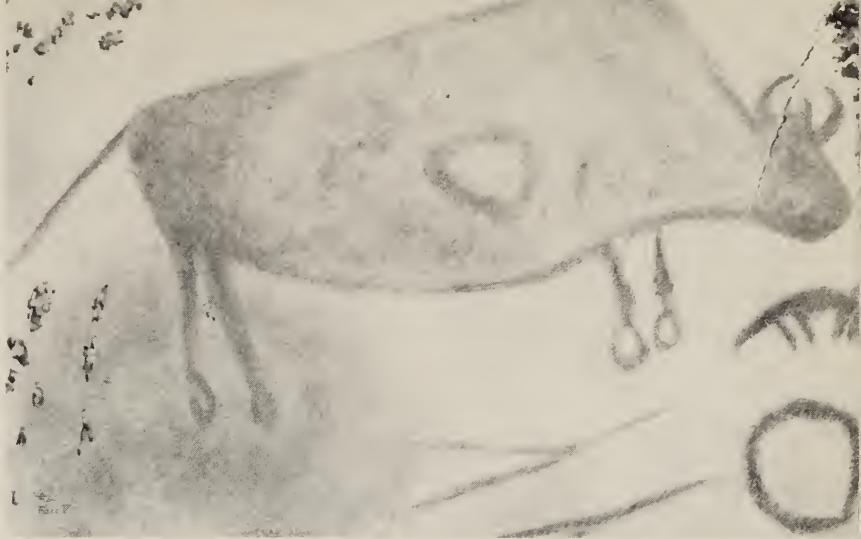
On the opposite page is a copy of the Bloodvein bison. The site is perhaps a hundred miles north of the

parklands where the bison herds once roamed; but the artist shows a familiarity with the animal that suggests either frequent hunting excursions southward, or his own southern origin.

There seemed to be—and I so recorded it—a vague indication of the heart in this bison, but I was still



Bloodvein  
bison



puzzling over it when it was time to go. The photographs convey the same impression without being any more decisive. A peculiar feature of the feet is the way in which the hooves are rendered as ovals. I was startled a few months later, leafing through a book on the Lascaux cave paintings, to find exactly the same treatment.

Overleaf the "Bloodvein Shaman" is illustrated. I so dubbed it the following winter after going through all the Ojibwa birchbark drawings I could find recorded in the literature. Frequently in the scroll pictographs zig-zag lines like those emerging from the head of this figure are interpreted as thoughts or magical power enter-





Face II (*see text, page 58*)

Bloodvein shaman

ing, or emanating from, the person's eyes, ears, mouth, or head. Again, on a number of Miday scrolls the Miday priest is shown holding the otter-skin or other medicine-bag from which he and his fellow Midaywi-win "shoot" power into initiates.

The lines at the side of the head I would guess to be the same kind of hair arrangement as we see on Face

II and on the "Eagle-man," but in more detail.

The large canoe beneath and the porcupine to the left might represent the fighting prowess and clan of the shaman. But I must emphasize that these are only guesses.

The Sharpstone Lake site was spotted from the air by Peter while Jake and I were looking in other



Lower Manitou Narrows (*see page 72*)

Cuttle Lake, detail of lichen and pigment, Face I





Sharpstone Lake site

directions for a hearsay site we had picked up from a Little Grand Rapids Indian. It provided a wide shelf of rock that made an ideal landing-dock for the plane while Jake waited the half hour it took to trace and photograph the rather sparse, faint markings. Since I stood in a foot of water and could barely reach the higher paintings this was obviously painted from a canoe when the water was higher. Some of the painting has gone; for here, as so often occurs with granite, large slices half an inch thick had flaked off by exfoliation. Had there been more time we might have found a slab or two with pigment on it in the shallow water; but the wind was changing, and Jake's plane was in no position to ignore the fact.

We were very thankful for the accuracy with which a Red Lake Indian pin-pointed a site on a little

sliver of a lake west of Rex, north of the English River. Luckily enough the lake was too small for the pilot to chance a take-off with Peter, myself, and canoe aboard. Consequently we made a rendezvous for the end of the afternoon on Rex Lake, and on the way there spotted a second site.

Site #65 was next to a waterside rock shelter where Peter slept in the shade while I recorded the modest group of two handprints, a circle, an upside-down canoe, and a few other vague markings. Site #66 was an even more modest one: only a handprint, tally marks, and two vague figures.

At Grassy Narrows, and southward at two sites on Delaney Lake, we recorded two likely Maymay-gwayshi, a rudimentary moose, and a cocky little turtle that had a very human look about him. The real pictograph find of the summer was

#### Sites west of Rex Lake



Samples  
from  
Delaney  
Lake



not on any rock, but inscribed on a seventy-inch birchbark scroll, left ownerless by the death of the last great Miday practitioner in the area, Francis Fisher. Twelve human figures, all armless, and six water creatures appear on this, quite unlike anything in the rock paintings. But two bears are rendered in an identical way to those shown on the Shield pictographs.

When Chief Tabowaykeezhik learned of the existence and purpose of the Museum he gave the scroll to me, along with the late Miday "priest's" medicine bag, to be preserved for posterity in Toronto.

White Dog, just off the English River, is the only site where the local Indians had any interpretation to offer for the pictographs. The animal (painted in the usual red ochre) was a white dog, the human figure a woman. This came out while talking

to a group on the dock to which our Beaver was tied. "How can you tell it's a woman?" I asked one Indian. He drew himself up with some dignity to reply: "I am a *man*."

At another place and time a Nipigon Indian told me of the "White Dog Feast" in which a small dog was eaten by members of the Miday-wiwin as part of the ritual: "They don't say, we're eating a dog. They say we're eating a bear. They don't cook it very much—they eat the blood and everything—but I heard they drink medicine before." The bear, I might add, is the central figure of the Miday ceremonies.

My second visit to Red Lake yielded a site on that lake itself, to which I was taken by Bob Sheppard, a Provincial Police Officer who had an unusual interest in, and understanding of, the local Indians. The site was small and close to the water,

Left:

Grassy Narrows



Right:

White Dog



Red Lake pictographs



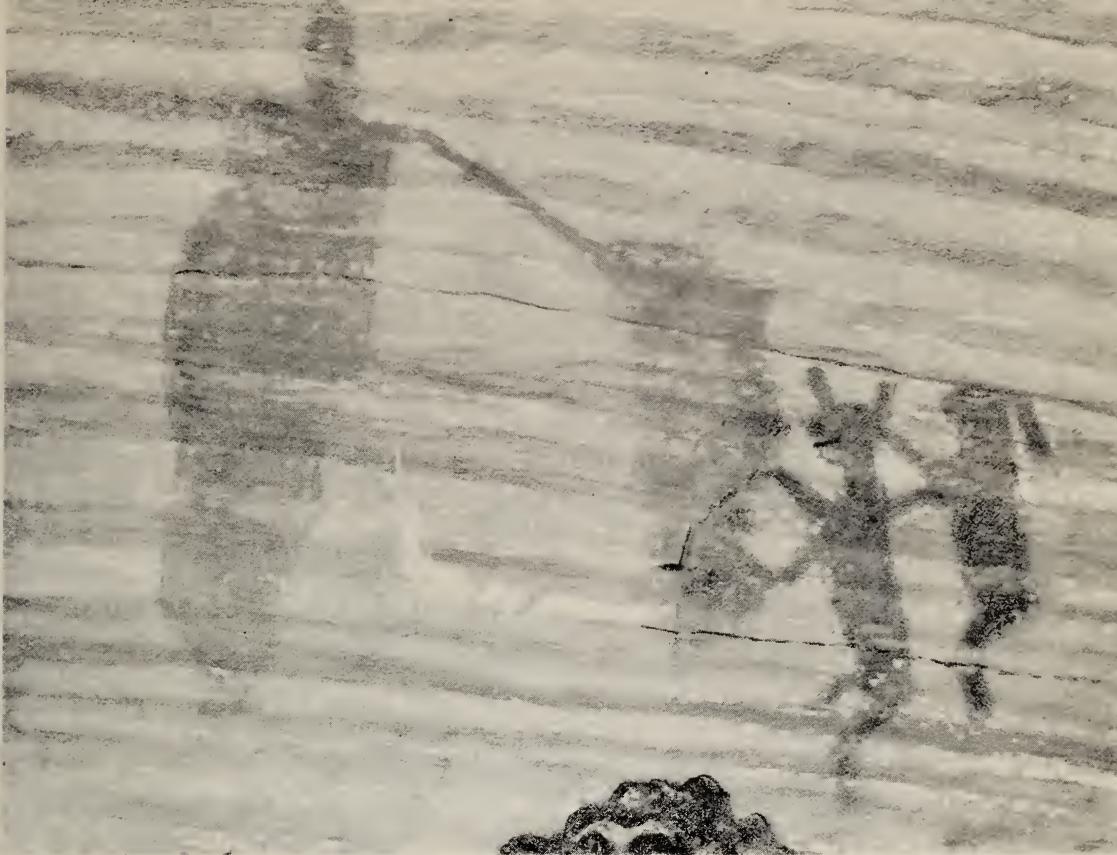
Route Lake  
pictographs

on a face that sloped outward at such an angle that I had quite a time getting the paper to cling to the rock.

The Red Lake highway runs past Cliff Lake, on which McInnes recorded a site I have yet to track down. With the help of Joe Vocelka, who runs a popular tourist camp there, we reached the one site known on the Lake. "Lots of paint but little to decipher," my diary notes. "Disappointed, we poked the nose of our borrowed craft into every bay and inlet except the northwest arm where, we had been assured, there wasn't a rock you could spit at. Not a sign of McInnes' site. . . ."

Before it was flooded Lac Seul was one of the paradise lakes of the north, with countless sandy beaches, great stands of white pine, winding creeks, and lush swamps where the wild rice grew thick and thousands of ducks bred. Here were endless miles of browsing for moose, and latterly deer, with depths where great sturgeon and fat lake trout lurked. With the flooding at least five pictograph sites disappeared; and the only clue to what they were like is in the peripheral ones. The Old Copper people were here, and who knows what other wanderers before them. Archaeologically the surface has barely been scratched.

Here I spent two idyllic summers in my late teens, and paddled south on one occasion to pass within yards of the Route Lake paintings. Years later, staring at the pair of figures shown on this painting, I was as mystified as any reader will be. What strange subtleties of aboriginal culture were manifested here?



Route Lake, detail

Until recently the area between Lac Seul and Lake Nipigon north of the C.N.R. has been as difficult of access as other parts of the northwestern hinterland. However the new road from Sioux Lookout to Armstrong will open up the Pickle Crow road, and be of great help in recording the sites reported in the area. Flying out of Sioux Lookout I have been able so far to record only four which must suffice to represent the many others.

I have John Macfie to thank for his meticulous sketches and notes on

the Vermilion River site just south of Carling Lake. Here, though there is only a sprinkling of badly weathered drawings, the setting is most unusual. In an alcove of the glaciated granite, against a glistening white reredos of encrusted lime, the little red markings appear like tiny icons. Passing Indians still leave tobacco in the little niche that is shown below.

A geological survey party ran into two sites on Vincent Lake while I was in "the Sioux" and passed them on to the District Forester. There was

*Left:*

Vincent  
Lake

*Right:*

Schist  
Lake

room for me on the airlift that dropped off their supplies. Much of the material was fragmentary and obscure, except some arithmetical-looking crosses and bars on Site #56A.

Reports of sites in the Savant Lake area were too vague to justify an airlift. But I had, as I thought, a fairly reliable location on Fairchild Lake, one of a confusingly similar series filling a thirty-mile east-west fault. Flying south from Carling I spotted a promising glow of red on a rock 800 feet below. We landed long enough to verify the site, then high-tailed it for home in the threat of a

gathering storm. I made a sketch of the landmarks from the air, assuming that this was Fairchild Lake. How wrong the assumption was became clear two days later when we flew over Fairchild in an Otter. Buffeted by one rain squall after another we vainly scanned the lake below for landmarks that weren't there. The site turned up ten miles west of Fairchild, on Schist Lake—an unreported site that we had found by sheer mismanagement!

#### *West-Central Hinterland*

From Lake of the Woods eastward to Lake Nipigon, south of the

Carling Lake (Vermilion River)

*niche where  
local Indians  
place tobacco*

northern line of the C.N.R., there is road access to within an easy water journey of most of the sites.

It was a great time-saver, however, to fly into Dryberry Lake from Kenora, and to be able to survey the outcrop locations from the air, before picking the most likely one to land beside. In this case we had only the name of the lake to go by, and a guess by a man who had heard that it was in the north end of the lake. But the sites we had picked from the air were unrewarding and it was many a weary mile that Peter and I paddled, encouraged briefly by finding one slight site on the north shore, before we moved into the northeast arm and finally sighted a huge, low overhang on the west shore.

As we approached, the whole face glowed with red colour and I knew we had located McInnes' site. What we saw was much as he had recorded it. Only the "eagle" was missing from his drawing, a puzzling feature, for if it had been painted since his visit it

would reasonably have been in the strongest colour on the face, and the contrary was true. The answer seems to be that McInnes ignored the forms that were indistinct, and perhaps also those that were puzzling to him. But we must also remember that he was there as a geologist, and that all kinds of interruptions were possible to make his record incomplete.

The serpentine form here we have seen in various versions before, but nowhere else in outline. The bird form which I have guessed to be an eagle looks rather more like a loon, erect and stretching its wings on the water. However, unlike Gertrude Stein who wrote, "A rose is a rose is a rose," the Indian would be more likely to say, "A bird is a loon is an eagle is a man is a manitou!"

A greater contrast in the mood of Mameigwess Lake could scarcely be imagined than the day already mentioned when we photographed it in a driving rain, and the day of our return. This time, as we approached

Dryberry Lake site



Mameigwess Lake



by borrowed kicker from our road's-end stop at Camping Lake, the day was hot and sultry and the water still as glass.

We entered the east end of Mameigwess Lake in an uncanny stillness that was somehow enhanced by the crystal clarity of the water, where even at two paddle-lengths depth we could see the sandy bottom, and watch small schools of pickerel swimming deep below.

When we looked closely at our "bison" there could be no doubt about its having been intended for a moose. Thin lime deposits had all but obliterated the identifying head and bell. Yet it remained an intriguing pictograph, surrounded as it seemed by flying spears. And were the hind legs drawn in two positions to convey a sense of motion?

As it stands we cannot be sure whether the second pair of legs might not have been intended for arrows. With the almost standard lack of motion in animal renderings on nearly every other site the former is most unlikely.

What the psychologists call projection is a real problem in recording these sites. For instance, on my brief visit to the Jorgensens the previous year they had mentioned a man with a bow and arrow, and I was sure I recognized one at the time. Yet on my return neither Peter nor I could find even a hint of one. The temptation is particularly strong in cases like this where obscurity and over-painting contrive to suggest all manner of combinations.

A letter I had from R. H. Neeland of St. Thomas, Ontario, has some

Indian Lake

interesting comments to make on a visit he made to the lake, then called Rangatang, many years ago.

"Our guide, who knew the local Indians, said that he had tried to get some explanation of the pictures from them, but had been told that they had been on the rock face long before their time. They were unable to give any reason or explanation. They added that there was a devil at the foot of the cliff and they were not going past unless absolutely necessary."

The consensus of opinion among the many Ojibwa I have interviewed is that the Maymaygwayshi were more to be avoided than feared. But there seems to have been a special fear associated with this site, having something to do with a large recess in the rock near the main group of paintings. White residents say that a *Weyn-di-gow* is believed to inhabit this "cave." It is an interesting fact that nowhere in the Shield country have I found evidence of Indian use being made of such caves as there are. This contrasts with sites in the Alberta foothills where I have recorded pictographs in two rock shelters and had reports of others.

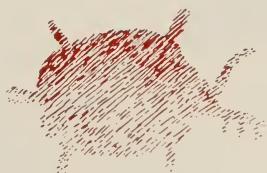
The paintings on nearby Indian Lake offer no startling novelties. They were likely painted from the ledge they stand above, whereas the Maimeigess site must have been painted entirely from the water. There is the suggestion of a fishtail on the two Maymaygwayshi delineated, which tallies with the belief of some southern Ojibwa that the Rockmen lived under the water.

The Turtle River sites, south of

Highway 17, both at the second rapids below Bending Lake, one above, the other below, were reported to me by my fabulous Fort Frances friend, Roscoe Richardson. The paintings would be rather dull if it were not for the handsome turtle. Here a typical distortion adds a grotesque touch—apparently a canoe is emerging from the turtle's body.

The turtle, too, raises the interesting question of whether the river got its name from the painting, or the painting its subject from the river's name.

The Cuttle Lake sites are so close to Rainy Lake that they might easily have been included among the border pictographs. When Art Colfer dropped me off on his way from Fort Frances to Nym Lake, Quetico Park,



Turtle River tortoise

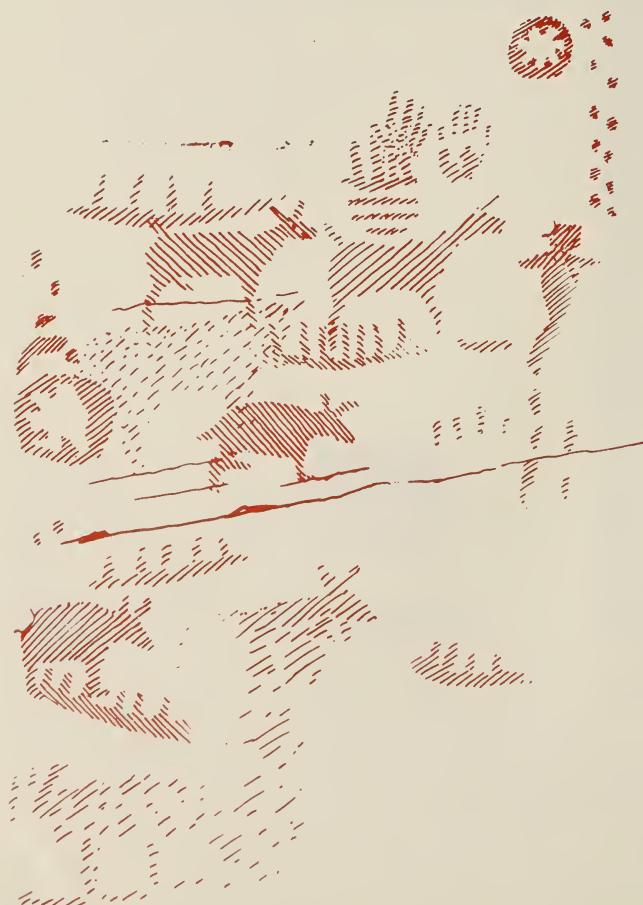
early in my second summer in the field, I already had some misgivings, for though he had taxied along the length of the only cliff on the lake I had seen nothing, and I was going in on the strength of veteran timber cruiser Bill Bergman's memory of a site he had noticed thirty or forty years ago.

I paddled back and forth twice along the shore before I noticed one little group on an obscure face. Looking for a place thereafter to make a fire and heat a can of soup for lunch, I happened to look up at the only angle from which I could have spotted them—a mass of iron stains on the rock high above the water, normally masked from view by a small stand

of trees. I scrambled up the fifteen feet to the ledge, pushed through the trees—and there was a beautiful sight!

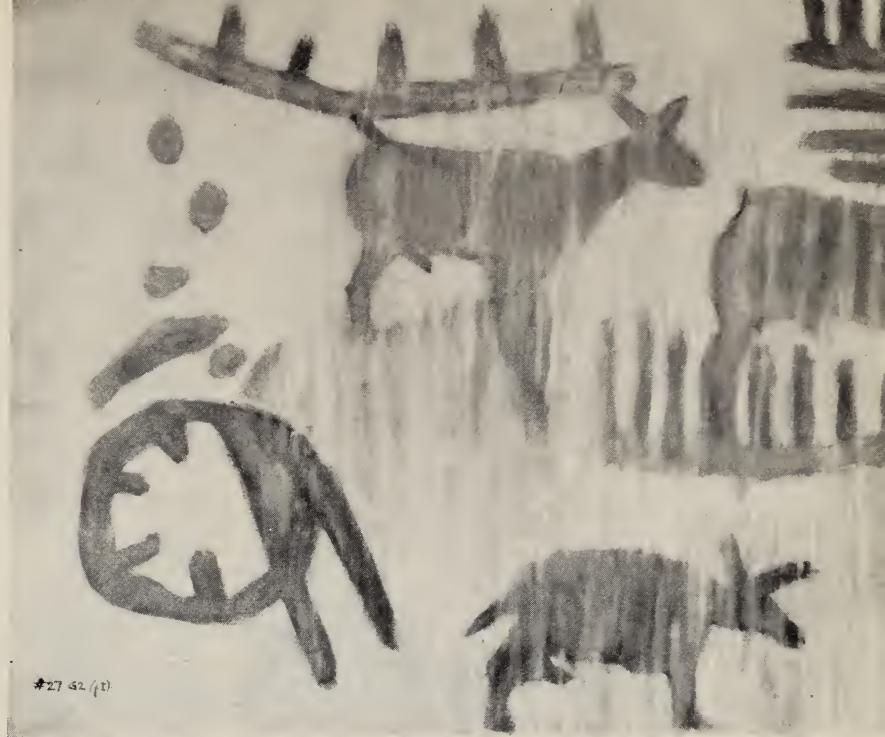
Up to this point every site had been easily accessible from the water. Here I had problems. First, how to build a scaffold to reach the paintings from the ledge, without an axe to cut poles or rope to lash them. Second, how to supply myself with water for tracing with no container other than a small soup tin!

Here were the first clear examples of overlapping I had seen. Here, too, was the first, and greatest, encroachment of the slow-growing *Rinodina* over an extremely strong pigment. And here I learned that the pigment



Cuttle Lake site  
(see also page 61)

Cuttle  
Lake  
detail

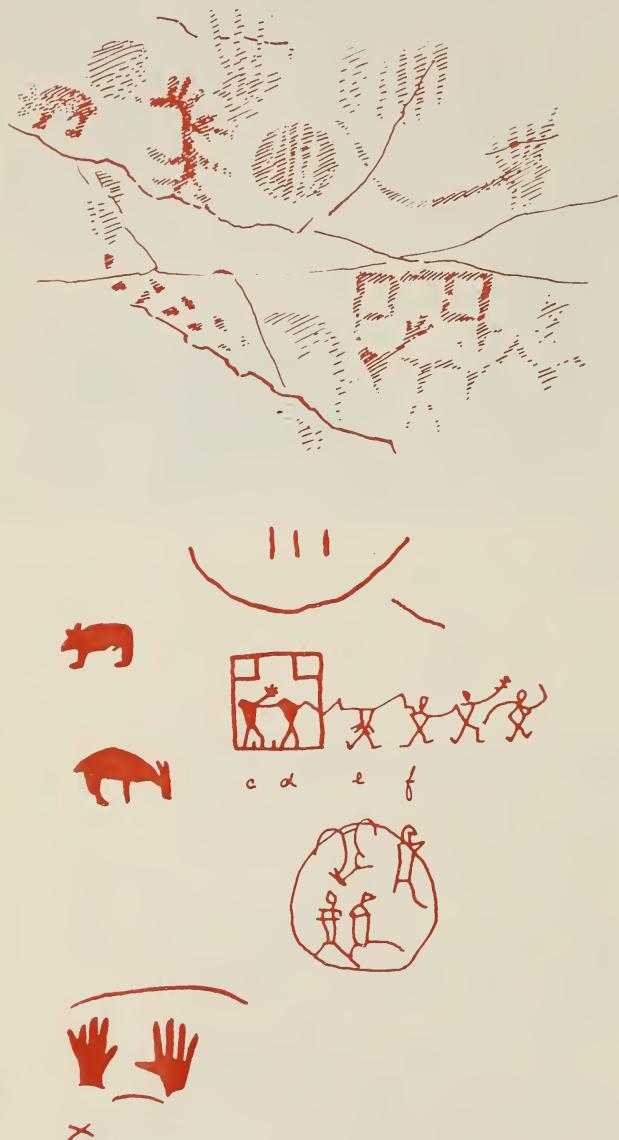


could be transparent; where the deer's feet overlap the canoe beneath, only the interposition of lime seepage in the one case proves which came first (see colour plate, page 61).

Only a few of the symbols were new: the forms that one might describe as inverted suns, and the most curious little demi-human centaur-like abstraction.

Two days earlier I had recorded an equally rewarding site, on the narrows south of Lower Manitou Lake some twenty miles farther north. This had been recorded by McInnes some seventy years before and I have

Lower Manitou Narrows  
(see also page 61)



McInnes' drawing, 1890

reproduced his drawing on this page for comparison with what I saw.

The central question raised is whether McInnes omitted the strange figure so conspicuously absent in his drawing, or whether he lacked time to put it in after recording what he considered more important. The square with the headless man is easily identified, and the viewer will note that there are only vague traces in my drawing of the chain of figures McInnes shows to the right.

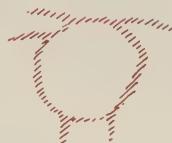
Moving eastward, the next hinterland site is a most obscure one on Lac des Mille Lacs. Almost vanished, little can be seen except the remnants of a crude little headless human figure. But Fred Peters, a local resident with some Indian ancestry, had a story to tell about its origin. When a boy who had gone off with another lad failed to return, his father went to the conjurer whose business it was to locate missing things, or persons, through his use of the "shaking-tent."

"Well," said Fred "he [the conjurer] told what's happened. Those boys is not dead they's living, but you'll never see them again. A few days after, this man was fishing and then he seen the drawings on the rock. So then he thought the boy was in the rock there. They stole the boys—Maymaygwayshiwuk did—canoe and everything. And that," Fred concluded, "is pretty hard to believe."

Only twenty miles southwest of Fort William is one of the most individual Shield sites on record. A short winding stream from Oliver Lake takes one into tiny Pictured Lake, surely a mere century ago one of the



Pictured  
Lake samples

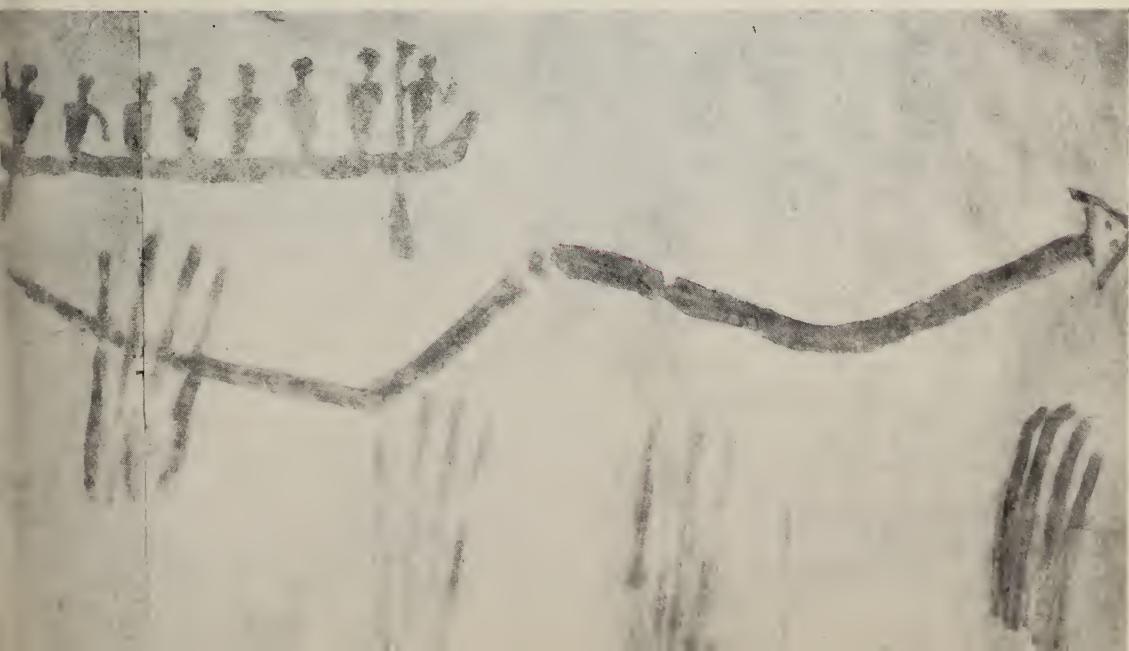


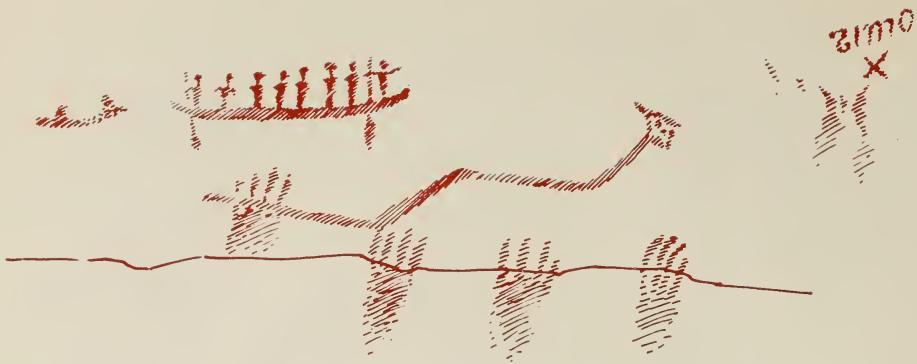
most out-of-the-way spots imaginable. The theory that the pictographs were associated with important canoe routes breaks down on this example completely.

Here, except for the Burntside Lake example, is the only rock painting in the Shield where eyes and mouth (or nose) are shown, on a kind of dog face that is itself unique, and is made more so by a tiny man with outstretched hands faintly discernible between the ears. To the

right on the same face is a circular figure, with feet but no head.

On Face II is the most remarkable painting of a canoe I have yet recorded, illustrated below. If we could trust proportions a dugout is suggested. More important, the heads, shoulders, and elongated torsos are clearly delineated, as well as a bow and stern paddle. On this same face is the name "simo" and the same vertical stroke between reversed brackets that we noted on a Whitefish





Bay site. It is a moot question whether the "simo" was painted by a semi-literate *courieur de bois* living with the local Indians, or an Indian who had learned in his contact with traders or missionaries so to render his own name. In any case the form of the letters, for all the backward S, is remarkably well executed.

Finally there are the serpent and the finger-smears. Again we find eyes, in the triangular head. Was our hypothetical *courieur de bois* standing by with suggestions, or did he perhaps paint all these characters?

#### *The Nipigon Country*

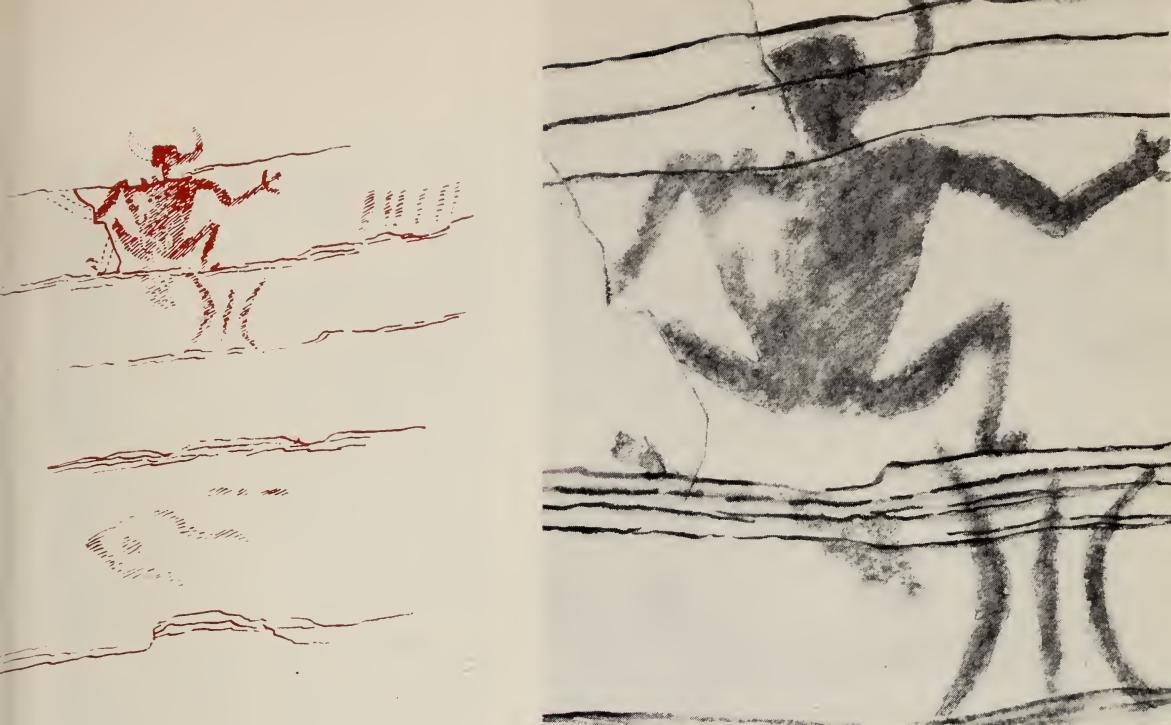
At the mouth of the swift, deep Nipigon, almost opposite the community of Red Rock, on the east shore of the river where it is already widening to enter Lake Superior is the major pictograph site of the area. Peter and I reached it by courtesy of a Great Lakes Timber tug that charged and hammered down the bulky British Columbia boom logs, churning through two acres of boun-

cing pulpwood to bring us and our canoe to the boom-beleaguered shore. Scrambling up a spiky deadfall we reached the ledge from which the pictographs were painted, a hard stratum of the reddish sedimentary rock that outcrops along this part of the Lake Superior Shore.

Influenced, no doubt, by the orderly arrangement of the rock layers, the symbols appear in neat succession along some fifty feet above the ledge—extraordinarily like an arithmetician's nightmare. The squatting figure that was painted from the shore below is surely a Maymaygwayshi; the more so as Lake Nipigon Indians informed me of the old belief in an underground channel that led from underneath this figure directly through to Lake Nipigon. This accounted for the Maymaygwayshi being seen up in Gull Bay with huge trout freshly caught in Lake Superior!

Notable here, too, are two examples of the reversed brackets enclosing a vertical bar. Another





Nipigon River Maymaygwayshi

example of this occurs far to the north on Wunnumin Lake in a contemporary lichenoglyph of which George Hamilton of Lands and Forests sent me colour photographs.

The pin-pointing of four of the Nipigon country sites I owe to Keith Denis of Port Arthur, the indefatigable historian-bushman and conservationist whose canoe has been upended over more portages north of Superior than anyone else's I know or have heard of. It was he who gave me my first report of the Orient Bay

site, and confirmed the report, by Mallory out of McInnes, of a site on Echo Rock, on the northwestern shore of vast Lake Nipigon. I am indebted to him, too, for other sites remaining to be visited in the hinterland west of Lake Nipigon, as well as one on the Superior shore south of Agawa in Mica Bay.

Site #33, only a mile south of what was once the Prince of Wales' fishing lodge on Orient Bay, was a real puzzler. Beside a handful of what were obviously Indian abstractions in



Echo Rock, Lake Nipigon



Kaiashk Bay

red were the faded outlines of a square-tail trout, black along the dorsal outline, white along the belly. I recorded it with reservations, confused by the naturalism of the colour and proportions. In my report I summarized it as "influenced" by European standards. A year later, through Keith Denis, I talked to the artist's niece, who well remembered the painting in its prime—a handsome rendition of the trout in full colour, that had been retouched from year to year. The artist had no Indian blood, merely summered in the Bay between 1912 and 1924. Since then I have eyed any colour but the Indian red with double suspicion!

In the summer of '59 through the most welcome co-operation of the District Forester at Geraldton, Peter and I were passengers on the spacious, diesel-powered Lands and Forests work-boat whose beat was Lake Nipigon. Heading northwest we crossed the big lake to Gibraltar-like Echo Rock, a great mass of granite that pyramids up from the shore, then drops sheer to the lake.

The pictographs are weathered almost to the disappearing point either by ice action or by exfoliation. The centre of interest, as well as the least undecipherable, strongly suggested to me an Indian's impression of a York boat, with a mast amidship, a suggestion of stays, and two plainly visible crewmen. As the reader probably knows, Lake Nipigon Indians were in contact with the French fur traders, notably Radisson and Groseilliers, as early as the mid-seventeenth century. The evidence is startling at Gull Bay, where I talked with heavily bearded blue-eyed men whose native tongue was Ojibwa.

Just south of Gull (or Kaiashk) Bay the shore is lined with three or four miles of cliff averaging twenty feet in height. Norman Esquega ran us along this shore in his small fish-boat to record three small sites, all illustrated on these pages. Here again I was on McInnes' trail. Yet he was either in a hurry, just jotting down sketches as he went, or he had not developed the more careful renderings of separate groups characteristic of his Red Rock and Lower Manitou and Dryberry drawings.

That the Echo Rock boat was intended for a large one is evidenced

here, for in these two-man canoes men with arms upraised in the same manner are far larger in proportion to the canoes than the crew of the Echo Rock boat. It is just possible that a widely travelled Nipigon Indian, seeing—let us say—the newly launched “Griffin” on Lake Huron with its hairy-faced crew, thought he was staring at a startling new manifestation of the Maymaygwayshi. The strange thoughts that passed through the mind of such a man on such an encounter we can never know; but like all men he would rationalize what he saw in terms of what he knew or believed.

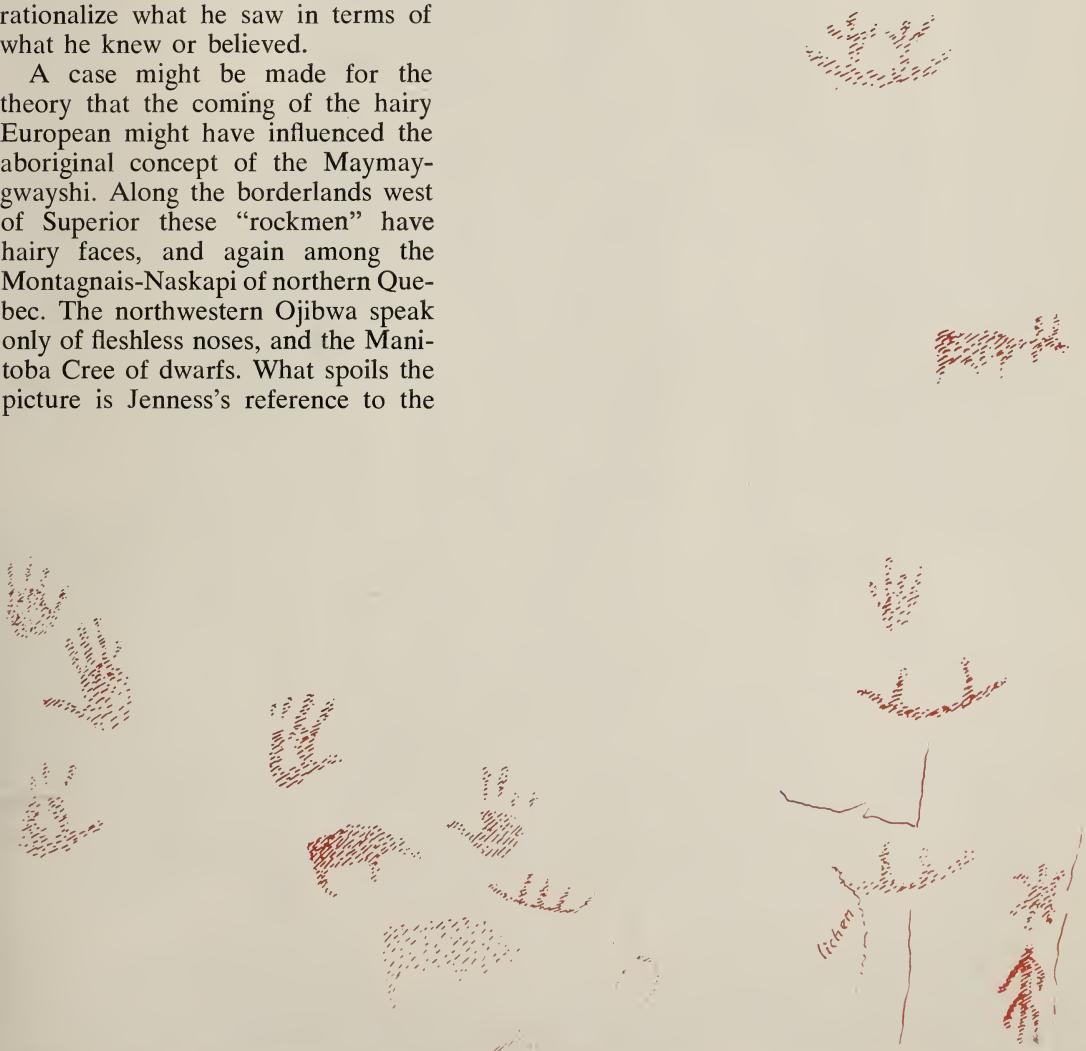
A case might be made for the theory that the coming of the hairy European might have influenced the aboriginal concept of the Maymaygwayshi. Along the borderlands west of Superior these “rockmen” have hairy faces, and again among the Montagnais-Naskapi of northern Quebec. The northwestern Ojibwa speak only of fleshless noses, and the Manitoba Cree of dwarfs. What spoils the picture is Jenness’s reference to the

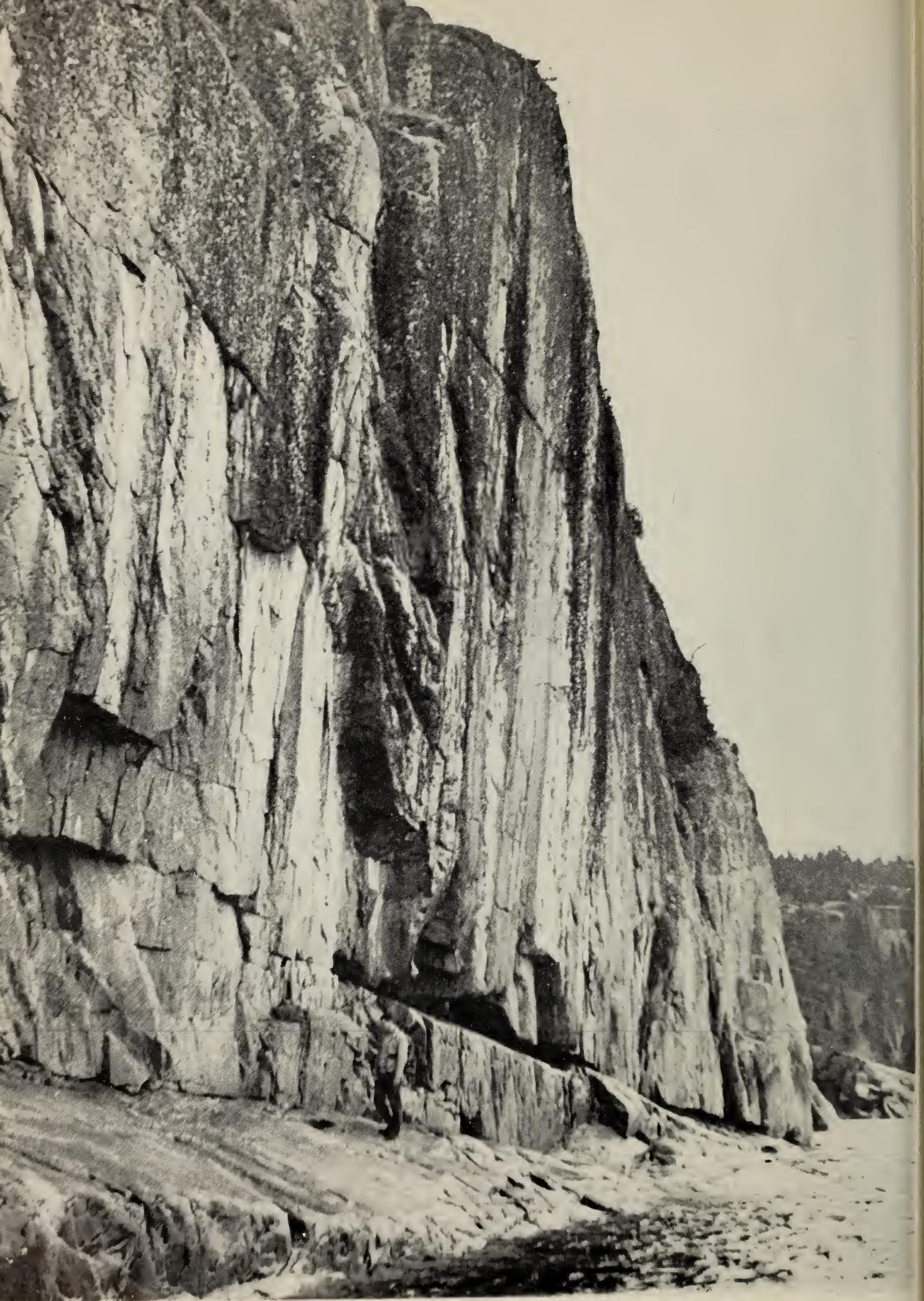
belief of Parry Island Ojibwa in a smooth-faced Maymaygwayshi—though their bodies were thought of as hairy.

#### *The Northeast Superior Shore*

The prevailing winds blowing across the world’s largest fresh-water sea pile great waves by summer and

Kaiashk Bay examples





Courtesy, the Telegram, Toronto

ice masses by winter on the rocks that line a rugged and little-travelled shore. Yet this was the route of the fur brigades a century and a half ago; and the Puckasaw pits, recently excavated by Norman Emerson of the University of Toronto, testify that men lived on these shores thousands of years ago. With the opening of Highway 17 floods of the wilderness-hungry are coming north, lighting their fires where voyageurs and Indians lit theirs two centuries or two millennia ago.

Of five possible pictograph sites along this shore only two have so far been found and only that at Agawa recorded.

Recording the Agawa site was the dramatic climax of my second summer in the field. Four of us drove north from Sault Ste Marie on a Saturday morning in mid-September to Mike Kezek's "spread" at the mouth of the Montreal River: Gordon Longley, Assistant District Forester, Dave Carter, *Sault Star* feature writer, his wife Ann, and I. In Mike's sturdy lake cruiser we watched the Lake Superior shore go by: the long smooth curve of sand-edged Agawa Bay—calm in an off-shore wind—the cluster of rocky islands off the promontory to the north behind which Agawa Rock lay hidden, and to the west the vast sweep of Superior, broken only by the low mass of Montreal Island.

At Agawa even in the calm the water was restless beside the sloping ledge under the sheer cliff and Mike anchored his boat well away. We commandeered a leaky punt from the fish-camp on a nearby island, and

paddled ashore with one oar, a piece of plank, and a bailing can. Then, as my diary relates, "I stared. A huge animal with crested back and horned head. There was no mistaking him. And there, a man on a horse—and there four suns—and there, canoes. I felt the shivers coursing my back from nape to tail—the Schoolcraft site! Inscription Rock! My fourteen months' search was over."

Soon the ledge was alive with flashing camera bulbs and busy feet. Gordon took charge of measurements, Dave took roll after roll of film, Ann carried things, while I plastered pictograph after pictograph with rice-paper and traced, traced. Offshore, Mike anxiously watched the manoeuvrings of Mishipizhiw in the form of an ugly rock that loomed out of the crystal depths uncomfortably close to his anchorage swing.

We were shocked by the crude initials splashed in black paint over the central figure; only recently I learned they were the work of a fisherman's teen-age daughter. But there were two consolations. She had dated her "work" 1937, and already the black was weathering into oblivion, the Indian's red showing through beneath.

We have yet to identify the Ching-wauk who gave Schoolcraft the bark drawings and interpretations of this site. It might have been Shinguaconse, widely known warrior in the 1812 campaign, but more likely Hatcher's learned Indian, Shingvaik, "who understood pictography." If the latter, we can more easily understand the discrepancies between his memory drawing and the original, especially



"The fabulous night panther  
and great serpent"

Does symbol to right of  
horse signify a turtle?



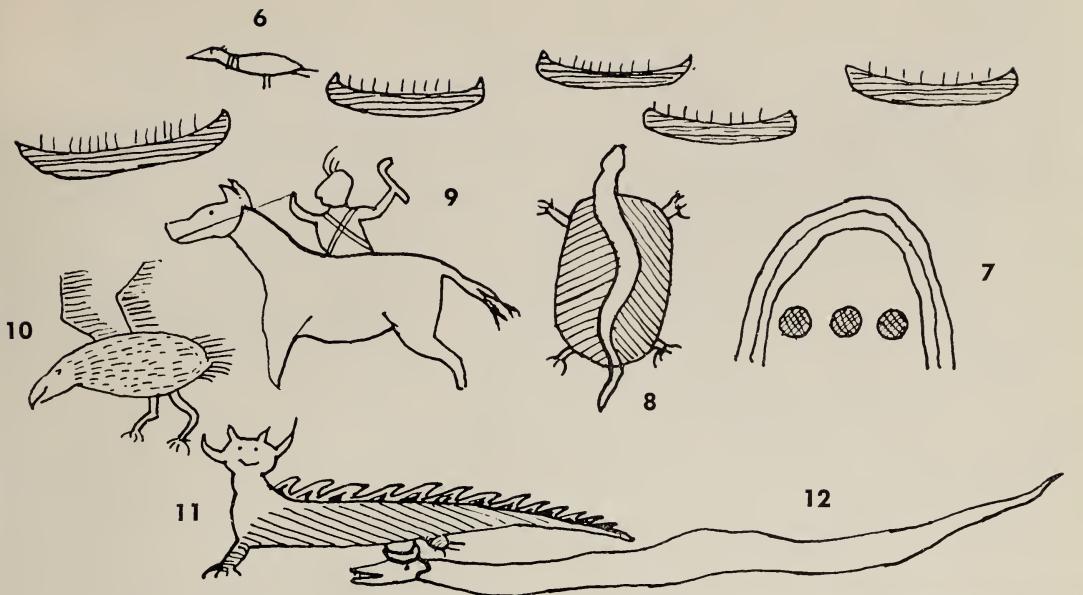
Symbols  
at site  
suggesting  
"four days  
over the  
water"

where he added details missing in the Agawa original.

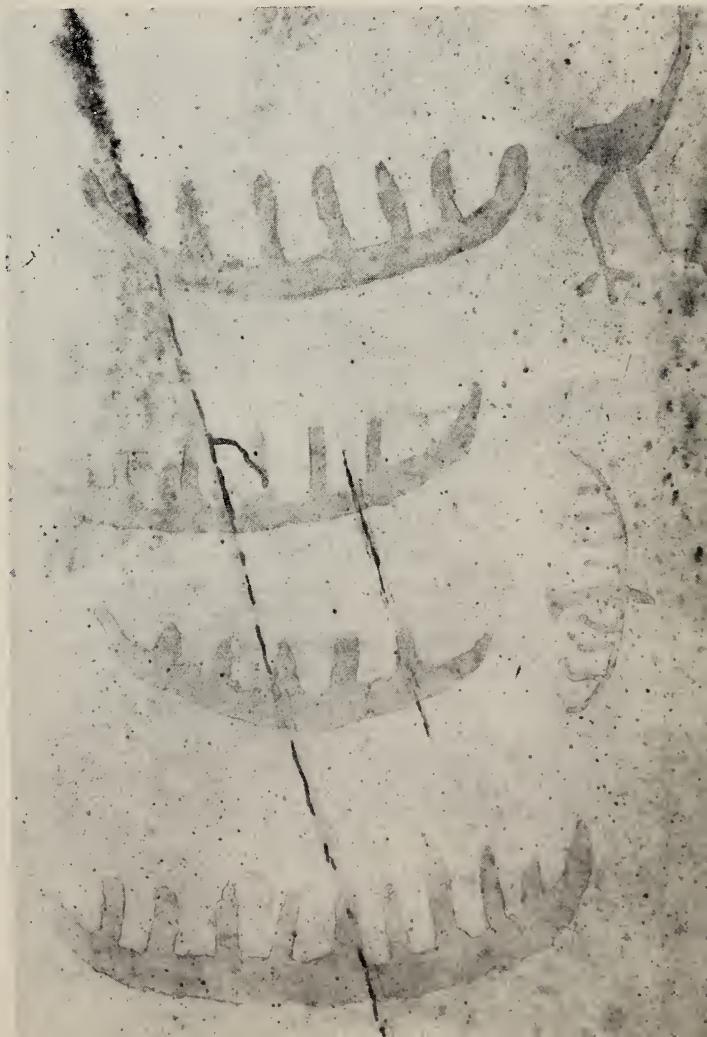
We offer here for comparison what seem to be the relevant pictographs on the Agawa site and a reproduction of Chingwauk's drawing.

Chingwauk spoke of a south-shore shaman-warrior named Myeengun, "who was skilled in the Meda [*miday*]" and thus acquired the influence and prestige that enabled him to organize a war party "which crossed Lake Superior in canoes. . . . The results of the expedition [are painted] on the face of a rock at Wazhenabu-bikiniguning Augawong . . . or Inscription Rock, on the north shores of Lake Superior, Canada. . . . The passage was made in five canoes. . . . The first was led by Kishkemunasee, or the Kingfisher, (6). . . . The crossing occupied three days, depicted by the figure of three suns under a sky and a rainbow, (7). . . . Number 8 is the Mikenok, or land-tortoise . . . which appears to imply . . . reaching land. Number 9 is the horse. . . . The Meda is depicted on his back crowned with feathers and holding up his drum-stick . . . used in magic rites. Number 10 is the Migazee, or eagle, the prime symbol of courage. In Number 11 he records the aid he received from the fabulous night panther . . . and in Number 12 a like service is rendered to the credit of the great serpent."

There are several discrepancies that space prevents me from discussing in



Schoolcraft's  
reproduction  
of Chingwauk's  
recollection  
on birch bark  
of the Agawa  
pictographs



Detail of  
canoe group:  
upper canoe  
is "led" by crane,  
third canoe  
by a flying bird



detail. However, Copway's brief inventory interprets an upright arch—often doubled—as “the sky,” and the *inverted* arch as “the water.” It is not too difficult to understand Chingwauk's unconscious conversion of “four days over the water” to “three days under the sky.” Or perhaps in Chingwauk's “book” the arch might serve for either sky or water according to the context.

Since the opening of Highway 17 north of the Soo the Lake Superior Provincial Park staff has built an access road and stairway so that the public may reach and view the site for themselves by land, at least on calmer days when the rocks are dry. Potential visitors are advised to take time to look carefully; it is easy to walk past some of these paintings without noticing them: especially when one has half his attention diverted by Lake Superior rollers lapping at the ledge. “Santa Claus and his reindeer” (as they were first reported to me) are rather far along and difficult to reach. The second version of Mishipizhiw is on a ledge that can be reached only by water.

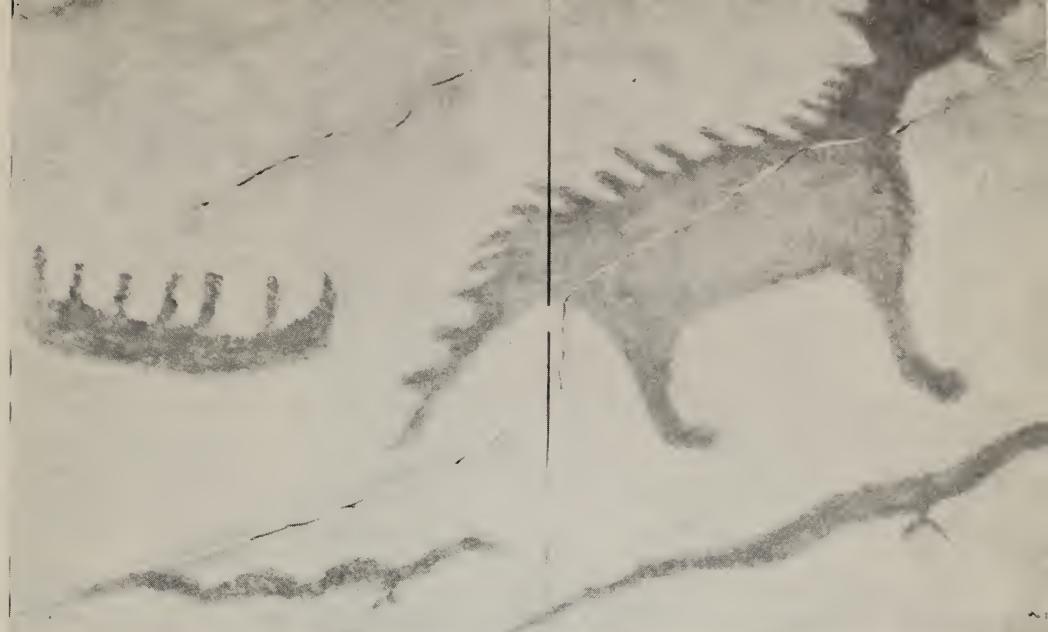
I strongly doubt whether the deer have any connection with Myeengun's paintings. There is, indeed, a naturalism here that we must travel all the way to Lac la Croix to duplicate. The reclining deer, in my opinion, is the

masterpiece in this regard—a difficult subject rendered almost delicately in a clumsy medium. Whatever this group may mean, the forms show a real delight in the subject for its own sake, and the style owes nothing to other rock paintings. The peculiar boat-like sleigh with one occupant again has no parallel in other Shield paintings.

The Agawa horse reproduced in line on page 80 not only indicates that Myeengun was a poor horseman, but provides a major dating clue. It is recorded that the first horse arrived in Quebec in 1647, followed by fourteen more in 1665, dubbed by the Indians “moose of France.” When did the first military horses appear in the Great Lakes region? Or had Myeengun been to the plains?

But for the pictograph-hunter the burning question is the location of the south shore site. Schoolcraft places it “on the banks of the Nama-bin, or Carp River, about half a day's march from its mouth.” This fits the Carp River in Porcupine Mountain State Park, Michigan, where a seven-mile long escarpment of a sort of sandstone rears more than 200 feet above the rough little river. Other





Detail of Mishipizhiw, serpents, and canoe  
(disfiguring initials were not included in painting)



Reclining deer  
(half-size)

Carp rivers along the south shore seem less promising.

#### *The Eastern Hinterland*

The country bordering the Great Lakes is big and rough, and sites tend to thin out. Inland the lakes increase in frequency as the country scales down; but not till we get into the Gogama-Timagami areas do we find the thick spattering of lakes so characteristic of northwestern Ontario.

In the northwest corner of this hinterland, on the very edge of the Shield, I recorded a modest site at Terrier Lake. "A poor site . . . two handprints, a possible human, a few dots and lichen-spotted abstractions," my notes sum up.

Lumbering has been going on in

the region for many years, and a depressing number of sites, notably those at Manitowik, Horwood, and Lady Evelyn lakes, have been drowned out by lumber dams. Fortunately one of the major sites is still accessible, the Fairy Point pictographs on Lake Missinaibi.

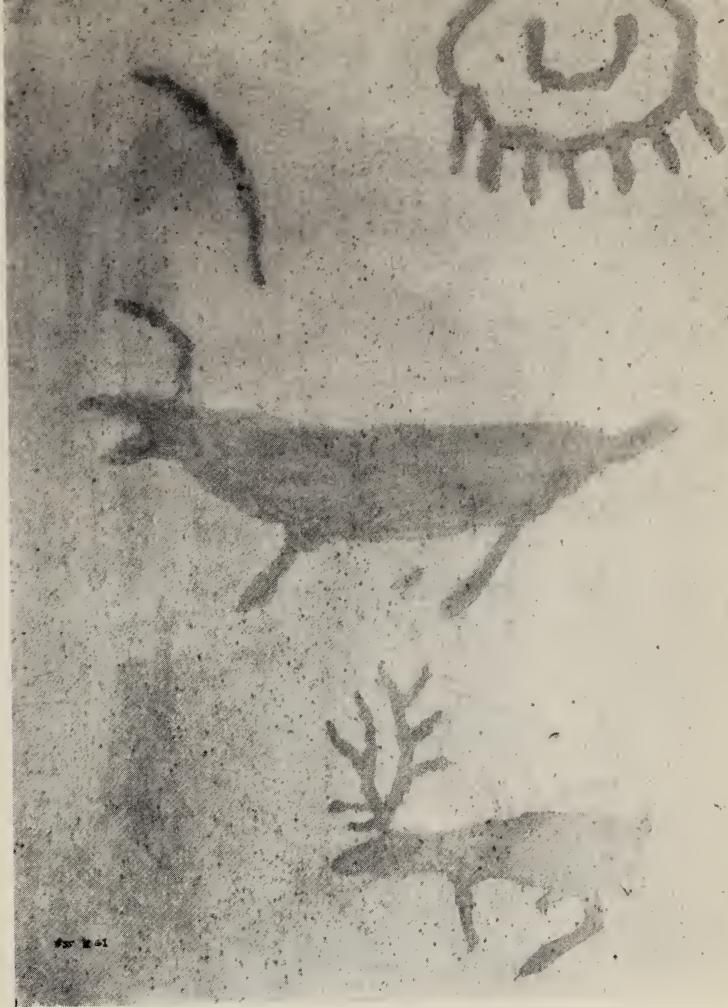
This was the site I had tried to sketch from the canoe on a trip with my wife. Seventeen years later I was back for a more serious effort. Vince Creighton, wild-life authority with a strong urge for archaeology, was with me, and Harry Tuvi, the local Lands and Forests ranger.

The water was even rougher than I had seen it on the previous visit. According to my diary Tuvi drove us close, "spattering spray and wallowing in the deep troughs. As we neared the cliffside it was obviously inhospitable, but we went close and I jumped on a wet, sloping rock with the rope in hand. A jerk on the rope from the boat—and it was let go, or go in. So I was marooned for five minutes till they could manoeuvre the boat close enough for me to jump back." Out on the railway years before they had warned Irene and me of frequent drownings off Fairy Point, of a big bull moose that had been "sucked down" at the place. When a brisk wind blows across the long southwest arm, building up big waves that bounce off the rock wall to make an ugly cross-chop, the tales don't sound so tall.

Faces VI and IX are illustrated here. On the latter it is not difficult to identify a caribou; the other animals are more debatable. The intriguing creature with open mouth,



Detail  
of Face IX  
Lake  
Missinaibi



Fairy Point, Face VI

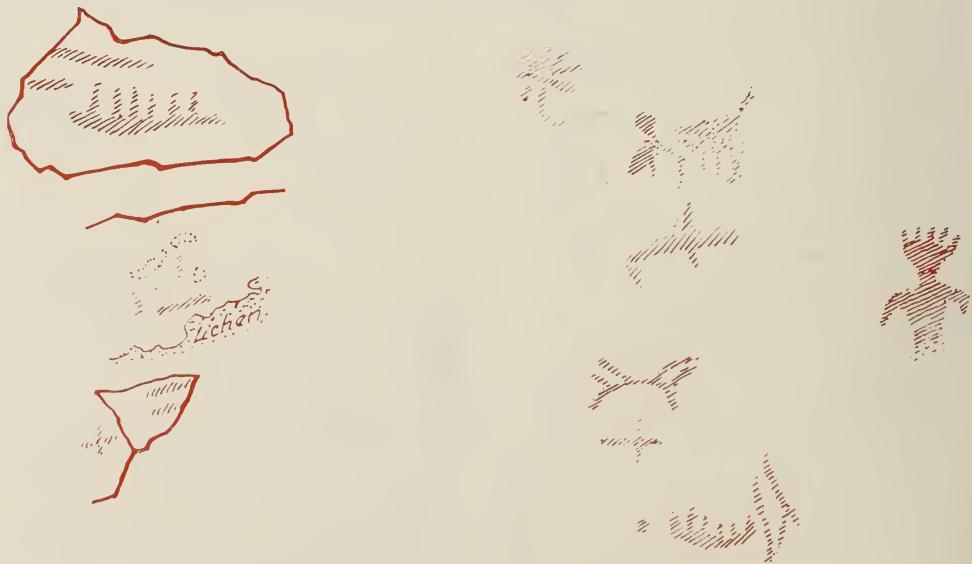
single, curved horn, and somewhat reptilian body I would guess to be a rendering of Mishipizhiw. On the other face there is little that can be understood.

Most of the symbols shown on these facing pages are mystifying, too. Is a feather head-dress indicated on the human figure, or rays of power? The little moose shows an attempt (as a sort of afterthought?) to render the two farther legs. The white crosses (not shown here) display the only white pigment outside of the Namakan site. On Face VIII there is a curious little figure that reminds me of the "centaur" on page 71. The figure with the three tally marks at the top suggests a horned man, but unfortunately is too vague for any reliable impressions.

I have already mentioned Jack Ennis, the prospector with the stories of Vikings on Lake Superior. I met him on my first paddle in to Lake Missinaibi, and it was he, on learning that I was an artist, who suggested that I look for the paintings on Fairy Point. On a later occasion when we had a few days together in a mining camp east of Heron Bay, the subject came up of the deep erosion fissures in the rocks along the Superior shore. It was then he told me of Indian traditions of having seen "red-haired men in big canoes who used to paddle right into the cracks in the rocks."

I suspect that the idea of red hair came from Jack's urge to prove the Viking stories. If one asks an Ojibwa a leading question like "Did they have red hair?", the answer is all too

Fairy Point, Face IV



likely to be a courteous affirmative, and if the interviewer is obviously naïve an Indian will get some quiet pleasure out of agreeing with anything he comes out with. In any case I have found that the Indians I have interviewed are much less concerned than I with such details; their verbal descriptions, like the pictographs, take it for granted that the audience will do some filling-in on its own.

I have yet to find an Indian who is not puzzled by the name of Lake Missinaibi. The Ojibwa prefix "miss" or "mish" means large or great, but the last two syllables seem meaningless. It's a long shot, of course, but my own theory is that "Missinaibi" is an abbreviation of *mu-zि-nu-pay-hi-gun*, a word Canon Sanderson of Red Lake gave me as the best

Ojibwa for a painted pictograph. In any case, so many things can happen from the time the surveyor asks a local Indian for the name of the lake to the time when it appears in print on a topographical map, that the wonder is that so many are intelligible.

An example of how easily one may jump to the wrong conclusion is provided by the name of the nearby railway station and Post Office, Missanabie. The assumption I made twenty years ago that this was a variant spelling of Missinaibi was corrected by an old-timer who recalled that the place was named after a Miss Anabie, a popular construction-camp nurse during the building of the railway.

One would expect, in the vicinity of such a large site as that on Fairy

Fairy Point, Face VIII



Point, to find other smaller ones. In nearby Little Missinaibi there are three such sites; and Manitowik Lake, where another site has been drowned out, is only a short hop to the south-east. However, flying over the country from Chapleau, I could see very few lakes where sites were even possible; and in fact over the past three years no further reports have come in.

The Little Missinaibi sites were reported by W. T. (Bill) Hueston, then District Forester at Chapleau, who took a strong interest in them. My diary refers to the scale map he sent me "on which all three sites were exactly pinpointed, so there was no

trouble but the wind, which made Site #76 particularly wet to work on."

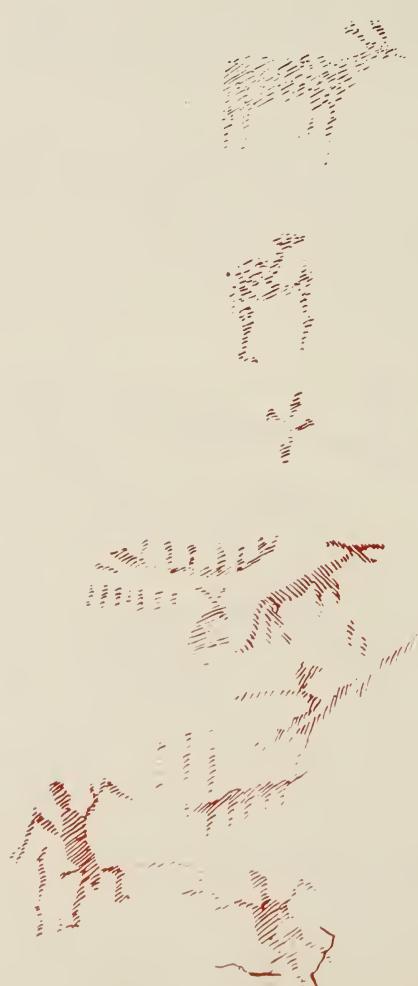
Site #74 was not too exciting. It is interesting, though, to compare the clumsy human figure on it with the tiny Maymaygwayshi type on #75 underneath an enigmatic abstract combination.

The triangle of hinterland enclosed between White River, Sault Ste Marie, and Sudbury is strangely empty of pictograph sites, or even rumours of such. My wife and I searched vainly for a petroglyph site south of High Falls near the Vermillia River on a confusing series of rock ridges just south of that river. Bill Hrinovitch, who went with us, had seen it twice, while hunting in the fall.

Farther east, in the very heart of the eastern hinterland are the Ninth Lake and Scotia Lake sites, which are illustrated on the opposite page.

Ninth Lake, on the East Spanish River is a short air-hop east of Biscotasing, for several years the home of Archie Belaney, the fantastic character who as a small boy in England wanted to be an Indian when he grew up—and did, as "Grey Owl." One can still hear colourful stories about him at Bisco where he made his picturesque transition from white trapper to "Indian."

The current water level at Ninth Lake was so low that the tip of my steel tape, when I stood in the canoe stretching it up at arm's length barely reached the upper limit of the pictographs; and toeholds were too slim for climbing. So I could only measure and sketch the paintings, and had to take my photographs from an oblique angle. This is the site where, through



Little  
Missinaibi  
site



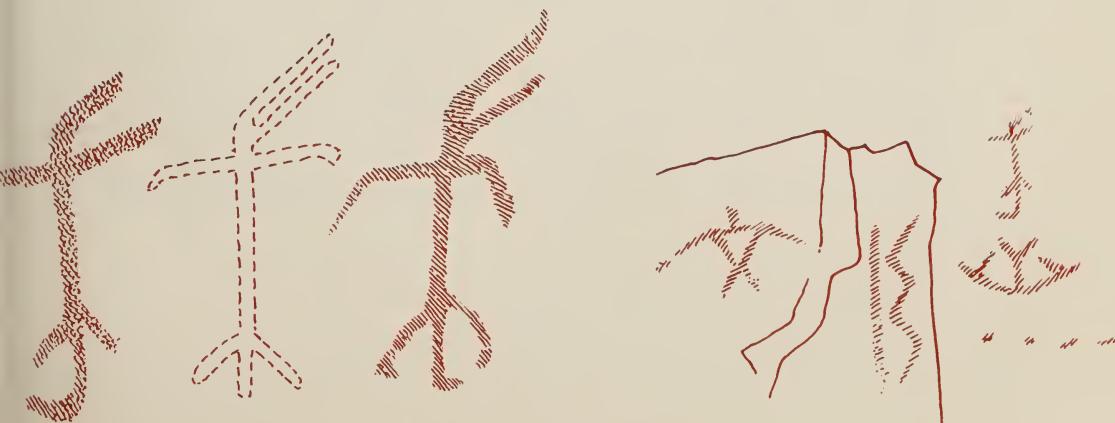
no one's fault in particular, I was stranded alone for thirty-six hours, with my canoe for a shelter, a tarp for a bedroll, a small tin of soup for meals, and—by luck—a small bottle of instant coffee!

This site, and one on the Upper French River that we have yet to discuss, were both beautifully pinpointed for me by Al Supple, woods inspector for K.V.P., a well-known pulp and paper firm.

The Scotia Lake site was reported as early as the fall of '57, but it was three years later before Peter and I, with Chuck Thompson at the controls, flew in to Camp Friday, on Lake Onaping, where we met our correspondent, Stig Stromholm. In-

terviewing an Indian woman who was working for him, I asked her if she knew anything about the Maymay-gwayshi. "That's an animal that comes out of the rock where the pictures are," she told me.

The Ninth Lake site offers us a neat little group of symbols: the sort of formalized drawings—including the thunderbird motif—that lead one to suspect that they might have been derived from quill work on moccasins or baskets. It is interesting to compare the upper right symbol with a rather similar one on Painted Narrows, and I have invented, to sharpen the similarity, a possible transition form. Yet one must be suspicious of such theoretical ingenuities.





Ferris Lake pictographs

The Scotia Lake site is saved from a certain monotony of rudimentary forms—perhaps human—by the rayed head. In Schoolcraft's inventory we find a "warrior bold as the sun" that is not dissimilar (p. 89).

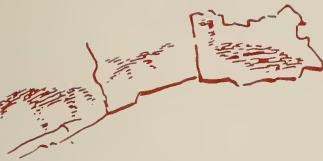
It was early in the summer of '59 that Irene, Peter, Christopher, and I pitched our tent on the desolate shore of Upper Grassy Lake, deep in the Gogama forest. Here a disastrous fire had left only a few gaunt, weather-bleached pine sticks standing above a tangle of deadfall and second growth. A strong wind whipped up the fine sand that once had been covered with forest humus, till there was sand on our bedrolls and even between our teeth. Across the lake lay an Indian's cabin, with the morning's wash flapping in the wind against a background of scrub.

Peter and I put the canoe into the water and found one little site; mostly tally marks and finger-draggings, but there was one little Maymaygwayshi. We had hoped, driving in, to

borrow a Lands and Forests boat and kicker at Ronda, but the only available one had just broken down. So we decided to paddle in to Ferris Lake, variously described as seven, nine, and eleven miles away. It turned out to be fifteen, following the maddeningly tortuous curves of a sluggish stream, or crossing swampy lakes where shifting grass islands made the map useless.

"At last," announces my diary, "Ferris Lake, and down its length to find the site. A most peculiar one: little blocks of slaty schist with figures and symbols—a horse(?) and a dinosaur (!) and a human figure or two. Fortunately I could work from a ledge and recording went fast."

It was a weary crew that waved to the aging Ojibwa couple outside the lone cabin on Upper Grassy as we paddled past their place in the gathering darkness. Early the next morning, when I went down to the lake to wash, there was Thomas Nephew, our neighbour, wearing the



to the Quebec boundary. Inside Quebec, near Lake Kippawa, I have a reliable report of petroglyphs. Farther east, in the upper watershed of the St. Maurice River, Jacques Beland has reported a number of rock paintings. Doubtless, the Shield woodlands of that province contain many more.

A definite report, via Macfie and others, of a site at Diamond Lake took us in to Lake Timagami a few days before we did the Gogama sites. Peter and I flew in to Bear Island where we interviewed eighty-year-old George Turner, son of the former Hudson's Bay Company factor, one of the most knowledgeable men in the area, though only part Indian.

Confirming the Diamond Lake site, he also pin-pointed three sites on Lake Timagami itself. Our Beaver dropped us off at Diamond Lake just long enough to do a job on it. The rock here was a fine-textured off-white quartzite, an ideal background for the pictographs. Lake Diamond had been flooded, too, judging by the one group that was largely underwater.

A clumsy heron, the vestiges of a possible Maymaygwayshi, and a number of stick figures appear on this site. The circle with centre marked we have already seen at Cuttle Lake. Both Schoolcraft and Copway include it in their inventories: the former as "a symbol of time," the latter as "spirit!"



friendliest of smiles. I had one more site to record on this lake, and asked him to go along.

"It was a joy to have an Indian in the bow—an unusually good canoe-man, even for an Indian. And I was lucky to have him along, for most of the site was exposed to the waves and we had a wild time taking tracings and measurements. When I ran out of film it was too wet and rough to try reloading. So, back to camp—Nephew's sixty-nine-year-old strokes as powerful as a young man's, in a quick rhythm that tired me. . . . Talking to Nephew I learned that he portages seven miles and paddles twenty to Gogama for Church services. He has lost all knowledge of Ojibwa beliefs, apparently . . . knew nothing of the Maymaygwayshi."

Until I succeed in pin-pointing a rumoured site on Lake Abitibi the Gogama cluster will remain the closest

Site #80,  
east of Elliott Island,  
Upper French River

George Turner's Bear Island site revealed only a barely discernible triangle and a few tally marks. He took us in his boat to another island site; but all we found was where it had been. The rocks that bore the paintings were gone. Thence we headed into the northwest arm of Timagami for one of the surprises of the summer.

I was puzzled when we turned in and landed at a nice camp site on the west shore; even more so when George climbed out, walked to a little cedar that grew close to the water's edge, got down on his hands and knees and peered through the branches. In a moment he turned back to us a grinning face, and beckoned. Thrusting my own face through the branches at water level, with one elbow in the water, I saw the Indian painting—on a little rock plane of a small boulder!



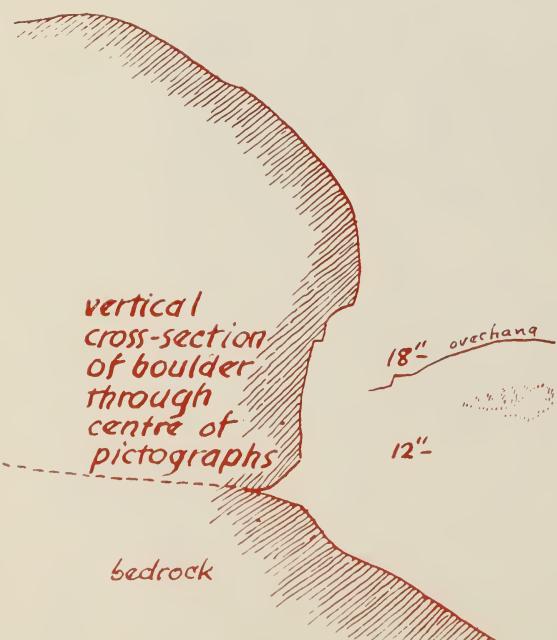
#### Voyageur Highway: East

On the voyageur route along the north shores of Lake Superior and Huron and up the French River to Lake Nipissing one would expect to find a fair number of sites. To date I have recorded five, found another at Mica Bay that Keith Denis tracked down for me, and have got wind of two more.

Both the Killarney Bay site on Georgian Bay, and the Mica Bay one south of Agawa have a unique feature in common: the use of yellow and black along with the usual red. At both sites some symbols have a non-Indian look, especially those where black is involved. At Killarney white pigment has been mixed with both yellow and black.

The most tempting theory is to suppose that the voyageurs—especially those with Indian blood and beliefs—tried their hand at rock painting. Lumbermen may have, too; for at Willisville, just inland from Georgian Bay, there are tar paintings, clearly non-Indian, on Alligator Rock.

The Collins Bay site is in the conventional red again, on the rock-lined inner passage that the voyageurs used when Georgian Bay got too rough for comfort. Here is an animal head



Northwest arm,  
Lake Timagami



as bodiless as that on the Quetico Lake site. Here again is our ubiquitous—though somewhat battered—thunderbird, and tally marks, I should judge, rather than the alternative canoe.

Farther east, I had no success in finding “an astonishing serpent” referred to in Harmon’s *Journal*, presumed to be in the vicinity of Grondines Point. In ’59 I flew over the area, a complex labyrinth of small islands and shoals, all seeming to shelve gently into the water.

Eastward, the voyageurs ascended the French River to Lake Nipissing, crossed that lake, and portaged into the Ottawa watershed. In all that distance, so far, I have recorded only

three sites and have yet to receive definite reports of any others. Site #33, just above Recollet Falls, faintly displays a small human figure and one other vague mark. Sites #81 and #82 were recorded through the hospitality—and original report—of John and Bill Kennedy. Both sites are at the upper end of the French River, not far west of Franks Bay on Lake Nipissing. The paintings on “Gibraltar,” as it is called locally, are badly weathered, and little can be deciphered but a few canoes. Site #80, a bare half mile west of Keystone Lodge, is in clear, strong pigment. Only the thunderbird, turned on its side, is somewhat obscured by lichen. The stick figures remind us of those



Site near  
Killarney  
Bay

at Diamond and Scotia Lakes. Among the others are a canoe, a pig-like bear, and a likely fish.

#### *Southeast Ontario*

Southward from Lake Nipissing the Shield formation reaches as far as the Severn River to the west, the Kawartha Lakes in the centre, and to the east breaks through the St. Lawrence Lowlands to form the Thousand Isles. In all this area only three pictograph sites have been recorded: one group of petroglyphs north of Stony Lake by Sweetman in 1955, and two rock painting sites, fifty miles east, on Lake Mazinaw. A survey of the lakes in this region would probably reveal an unsuspected proportion of raised water levels from lumbering operations that go back in some districts a full century and more. Lingering reports of rock paintings in the Muskoka-Parry Sound

area so far have been impossible to localize. The one clear report I have is of paintings on a rock on the north shore of Lake Simcoe that broke off and fell into the water in 1914.

The Bon Echo site on Lake Mazinaw, however, amply compensates at least in extent for other sites that may have vanished in the area. The air view on the opposite page shows the *koo-chi-ching*, or "Little-lake-at-the-end-of-a-big-lake" of Lake Mazinaw, and the southern end of the main lake. The sandy spit we see is a part of the Bon Echo property, formerly owned by Merrill Dennison, now a Provincial Park. The huge granite escarpment on which the paintings appear is visible on the right, averaging 100 feet in height for a full mile. In numbers of paintings as well as for sheer bulk Bon Echo has no rival in Ontario. In June of '58 I recorded a hundred and thirty-



Lake Mazinaw  
"Rabbit-man"



Courtesy, Ontario Department of Lands and Forests

five symbols, scattered over twenty-seven faces.

Site #38, on Little Mazinaw, roughly a mile and a half south of the main site, has three faces.

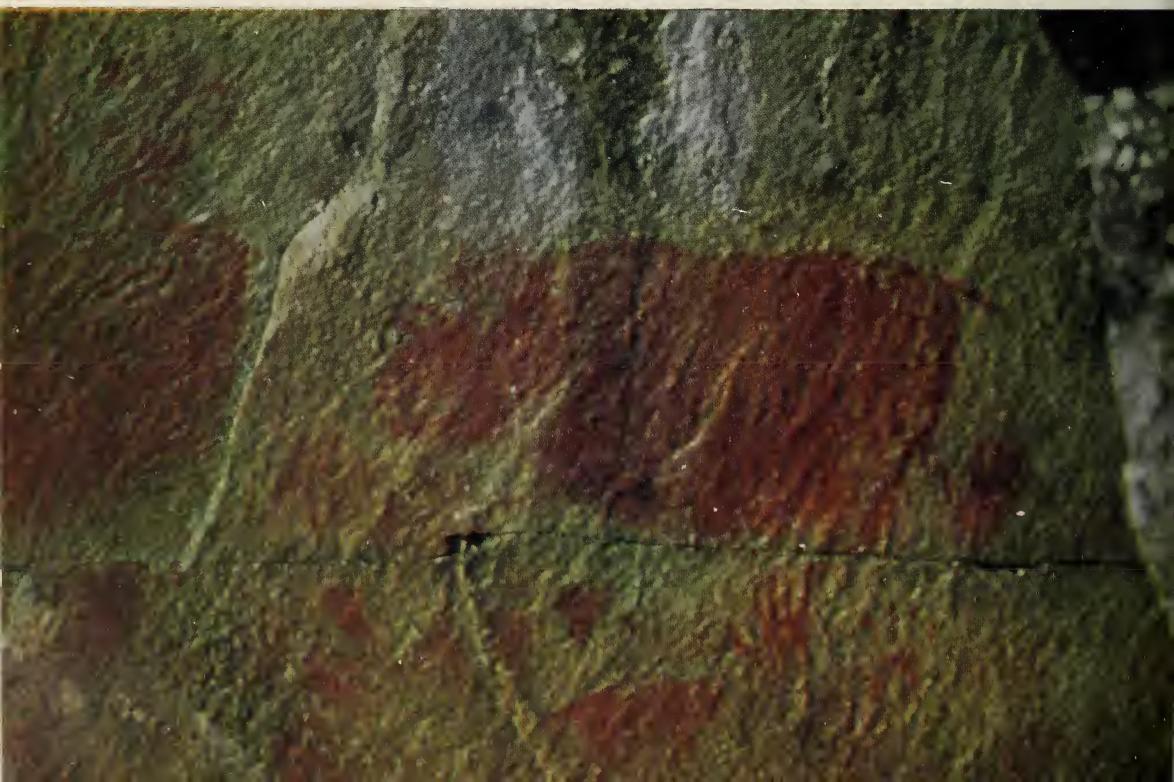
The following pages illustrate only about a fifth of the actual paintings on the site, all easily accessible by canoe. Of those omitted many are either so weathered or so repetitive that the viewer would find them of minor interest. Handprints are entirely absent, canoes are rare, and the tendencies toward geometric types

of abstractions so marked that we are tempted to ask whether the paintings are not the product of a culture quite distinct from those farther west. They seem older, too, in so far as a large number have been weathered to near-disappearance. There can be no reasonable doubt that the lake's present name (variously spelled in early references as "Massanog," "Massinaw," etc.) is from the Algonkian word for "picture," "writing," "painting," "book" (*mu-z-i-nu-hi-gun*).



Lake Mazinaw, Face II

Site #99, south of Devil's Bay, Lake of the Woods



The colour reproduction on the opposite page is from Face II, the second most northerly, one of the strongest in colour, and as mystifying as any. The weird central figure is surely no native animal, although the shoulder-neck area is too badly weathered for the viewer to be able to make out the original outline. The strong suggestion of cloven hoofs is unique. Note the small animal beneath this one's belly—not identifiable either, but far more typical of the other animals on the site.

Even the canoe, if we so interpret the lower part of the painting, is

strikingly different from others elsewhere. Are the diagonal strokes intended for arms, or paddles, or something else? And what about the strange little animal to the lower left (related perhaps to the large one), for dorsal spines are quite clear along its back, appearing also on the intact portion of the larger animal's back?

Below, by way of contrast, is a colour reproduction of the bison at Site # 99, on Lake of the Woods at the opposite end of the province.

When it comes to the human renderings above, we are again at a loss. Are these a hare's ears on this

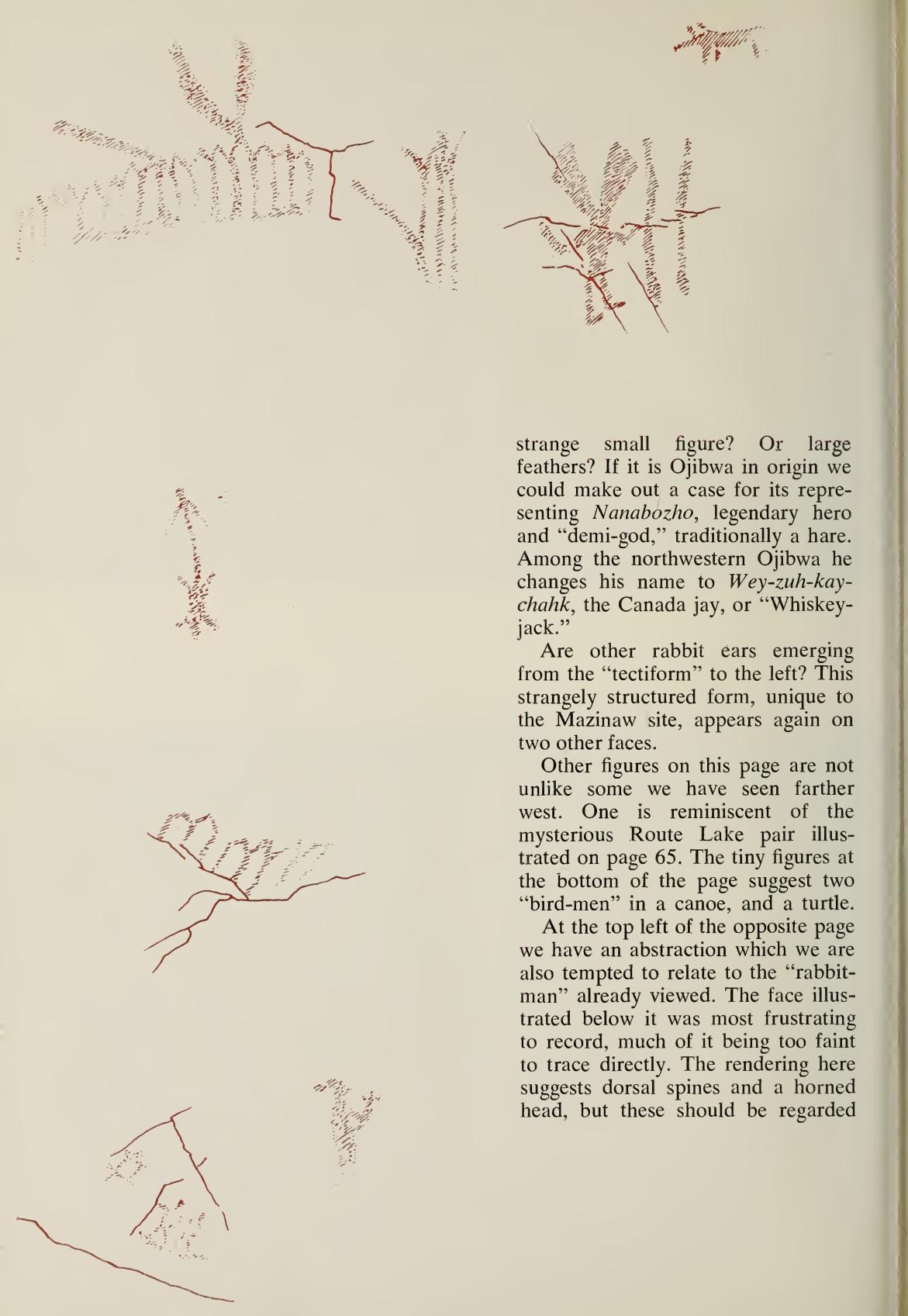
Lake  
Mazinaw  
site

Face VII



Face II





strange small figure? Or large feathers? If it is Ojibwa in origin we could make out a case for its representing *Nanabozho*, legendary hero and "demi-god," traditionally a hare. Among the northwestern Ojibwa he changes his name to *Wey-zuh-kay-chahk*, the Canada jay, or "Whiskey-jack."

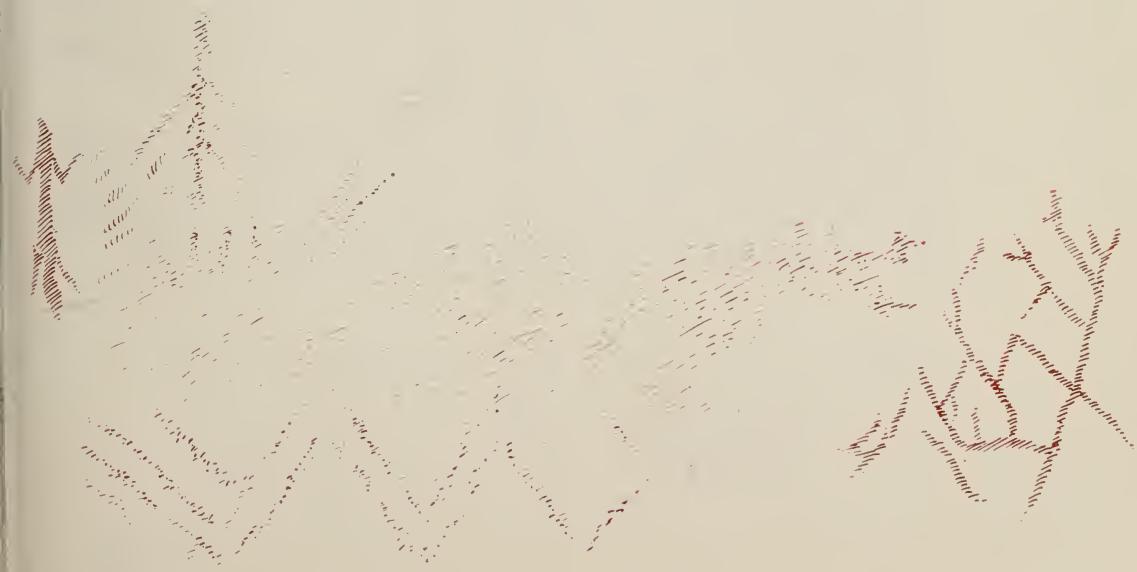
Are other rabbit ears emerging from the "tectiform" to the left? This strangely structured form, unique to the Mazinaw site, appears again on two other faces.

Other figures on this page are not unlike some we have seen farther west. One is reminiscent of the mysterious Route Lake pair illustrated on page 65. The tiny figures at the bottom of the page suggest two "bird-men" in a canoe, and a turtle.

At the top left of the opposite page we have an abstraction which we are also tempted to relate to the "rabbit-man" already viewed. The face illustrated below it was most frustrating to record, much of it being too faint to trace directly. The rendering here suggests dorsal spines and a horned head, but these should be regarded

with some suspicion; I may well here have succumbed to my own wishful thinking. The more familiar forms below call for little comment, but those in the bottom margin are strange indeed. The one might have been influenced by a pottery design; the other might be described as "geometricized tree branches" for lack of a better guess.

On the next page are still further examples of relatively complex abstractions so typical of this site. Along with this tendency is an equally marked absence of any urge to naturalism, a trend that seems to grow in strength as one moves west. Recall that here we are on the southern periphery of the Shield formation and this is not too surprising. In historical times this was the border country between the nomadic Algonkian hunters of the Shield woodlands and the corn-raising Iroquoians of the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes lowlands. Regardless of the ebb and flow of prehistoric cultures, geography





Site #37, Face XXVIIIa

would always have exerted a border-land influence here.

Beyond its geographical situation the Mazinaw setting itself must have exerted a powerful spell on any human group to whom it was familiar. The awe and disquietude associated with far less impressive sites in the north and west is clearly indicated by the lingering mythological associations. How much more would the Mazinaw setting have stimulated such responses!

For Christopher, Irene, and me it was a sobering experience merely to paddle along the base of this cliff, sensing the depth of the water beneath and the height of the rock above, where occasionally jutting crags eighty or ninety feet overhead seemed ready to plunge down on us—and undoubtedly *would* fall some day. One afternoon we were more than a little startled to see the water

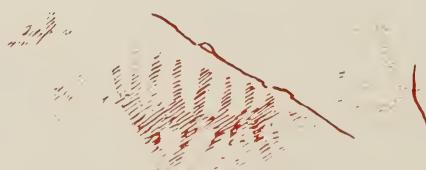


Little Mazinaw Lake, Face III

nearby begin an inexplicable whirling motion, accelerating till it lifted suddenly into a miniature waterspout, then vanishing as quickly as it had appeared. A trick of the air currents, no doubt, with thermals playing around the cliff on a hot summer day; but uncanny for all that.

Site #38 is only a mile south of the main Mazinaw site, with only three small faces, one of which is illustrated here. There surely were others in neighbouring lakes; but it is a century or more since lumbering operations began, and it is altogether likely that dams have drowned out the others. I have had only one report of another site in the region—in the Gananoque Lakes area.

This completes the roster of Shield sites so far recorded and the reader will be ready to view them from the broader perspective of Kenneth Kidd in the final pages of our story.



Site #37,  
Face XXIV

*Anthropological  
Background*

KENNETH E. KIDD



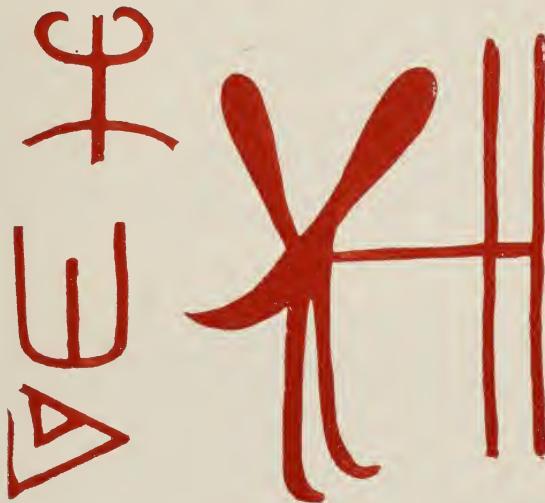
A NATION'S RESOURCES include many things. When one thinks of them, one is most likely to think first of all of agricultural, mineral, and forest resources, for these are primary; and then, secondly, of manufacturing and industrial potential. There is, however, besides these a multitude of assets which go to make up the total heritage, and among them one may well count anthropological and historical legacies. Part of the Canadian heritage is the complex of Indian rock paintings left by generations of woodland dwellers who inhabited the country before the white man arrived on its shores, and for some time thereafter.

It is indeed true that rock paintings are not limited to Ontario, to Canada, nor even to North America. The cave paintings of France and Spain and certain other parts of Europe have been known for many years, while those of Tassili in the Sahara desert have recently been discovered, studied, and admirably described by Henri Lhote. In Siberia, numerous sites have been found and described by the Russian archaeologist, Okladnikov. The South African rock paintings, many of them studied by the late Abbé Breuil, are justly famous, and each year adds fresh discoveries to their already large number. There is indeed no continent, and but few countries, which cannot claim to have some examples of this type of record from its past. In North America, the distribution of rock paintings is very great; in fact, few large areas which were suitable for making them were overlooked or neglected.

The first mention of these American paintings which has come to the present writer's attention appeared in the English periodical *Archaeologia* in 1781; generally speaking, they attracted little attention, however, either on the part of the antiquarians of the day, or of the many travellers who had the opportunity of seeing them. The first systematic attempt to record rock paintings on this continent was undertaken by Colonel Garrick Mallery in the United States. His eight-hundred-page report to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, under the aegis of the Bureau of American Ethnology, and containing the results of his investigations from 1876 to 1893, forms the bulk of that Bureau's tenth annual report. Using the term "pictograph" as a generic designation to cover "picture-writing" in every sort of medium—bark, wood, bone, rock, copper, hide, and so on; whether painted, smeared, carved, scratched, pecked, or pounded—he made an invaluable record, extensively illustrated, of the examples of which he knew personally or by report.

Though Mallery concentrated upon sites within the borders of the United States, he included what he had learned about other sites in the Americas, and even beyond, but the only Canadian rock pictures actually illustrated in

his report were carvings on the shores of Fairy Lake in Nova Scotia. As for other records of Canadian occurrences, a thorough search of the literature has not yet been made. But it is known that even before the turn of the century, some sites here and there across Canada had been noted; rock carvings and rock paintings had both been recorded in the far west before 1900. In Ontario, two men particularly were alert to and recorded graphically the occurrence of rock paintings. One of these, David Boyle, the first director of the Provincial Museum, recorded rock paintings at the large site at Bon Echo Lake, as well as those at two smaller sites north of Lake Timagami, on Diamond and Lady Evelyn Lakes. The other man, a geologist named McInnes, made sketches of such sites as he found while examining rock outcroppings on the shores of the Shield country lakes and rivers, during the course of work done in northwestern Ontario for the Geological Survey. Neither man was an artist, and each had to sketch under the exigencies of other work; yet despite some inaccuracies, their records are invaluable.



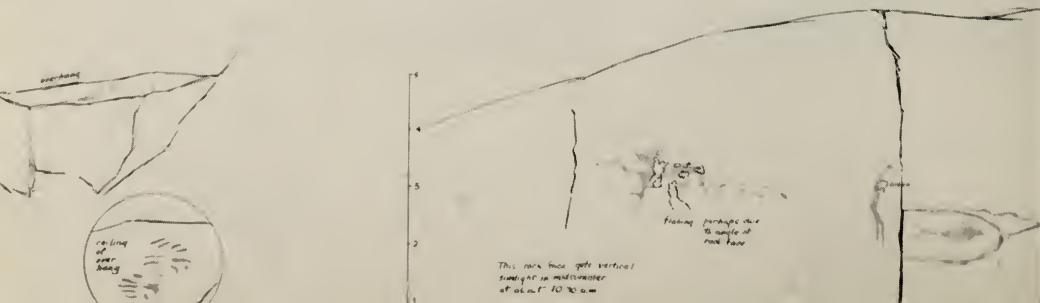
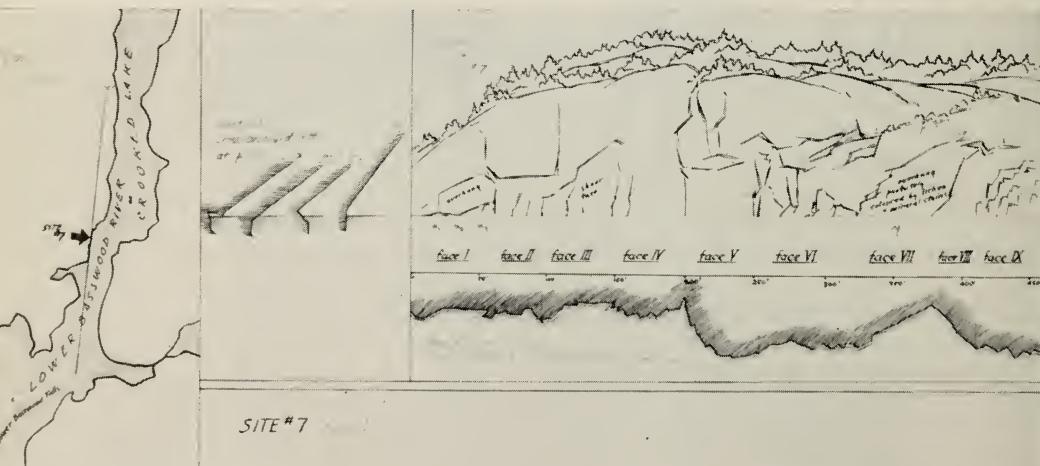
Drawing  
by  
David  
Boyle  
of detail  
on Face X  
(see page 94)

The idea from which the present survey stems had its beginnings in 1946, when Mr. A. E. Kundert, of Madison, Wisconsin, sent to the Royal Ontario Museum a small number of colour photo transparencies, showing rock paintings he had seen on Lake Mameigwess in the Lakehead area of Ontario. In one of them could be seen an animal which appeared to have a hump on its back, suggesting a bison. Bison in such heavily wooded, lake country would be an interesting phenomenon indeed and the matter aroused the writer's curiosity. This information was followed up by inquiries addressed to two well-known students of the history and lore of the Lakehead area to see what further evidence of rock paintings might be on record locally. Mr. Sigurd

Olson, the prominent naturalist, author, and conservationist, and Dr. Grace Lee Nute of the Minnesota Historical Society both replied that they knew of such occurrences at Hegman Lake, Minnesota. Professor Robert C. Dailey of the Department of Anthropology in the University of Toronto noted several occurrences during field work in Quetico Park.

The matter lay fallow for several years, and it was not until the Quetico Foundation enabled the writer to make a trip through Quetico Park for quite a different purpose that it was revived. On that trip, the writer was able to see for himself the splendid paintings of moose on the rocky ledges of Irving Island in Lac la Croix, which convinced him that they were worthy of recording. In 1957 the project got started. In that year, the Quetico Foundation kindly provided necessary funds to carry through the work for one summer, if a suitable recorder could be found and if the Royal Ontario Museum were agreeable to supervising it. This the Museum was happy to do, and chose Mr. Selwyn Dewdney to carry out the field work. He was an excellent choice, both because of his training in art and because of his experience in and knowledge of the woodland country where he would have to work. He had canoed extensively through it in his youth, knew and understood how to face its problems, and had a sympathetic attitude towards the native inhabitants. Thus the project was launched.

The Wilderness Research Center at Basswood Lake, Minnesota, was also interested in the project, and in each succeeding year has generously lent its support. The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests assisted in many ways, and it is safe to say that, without its help, much of the work could not



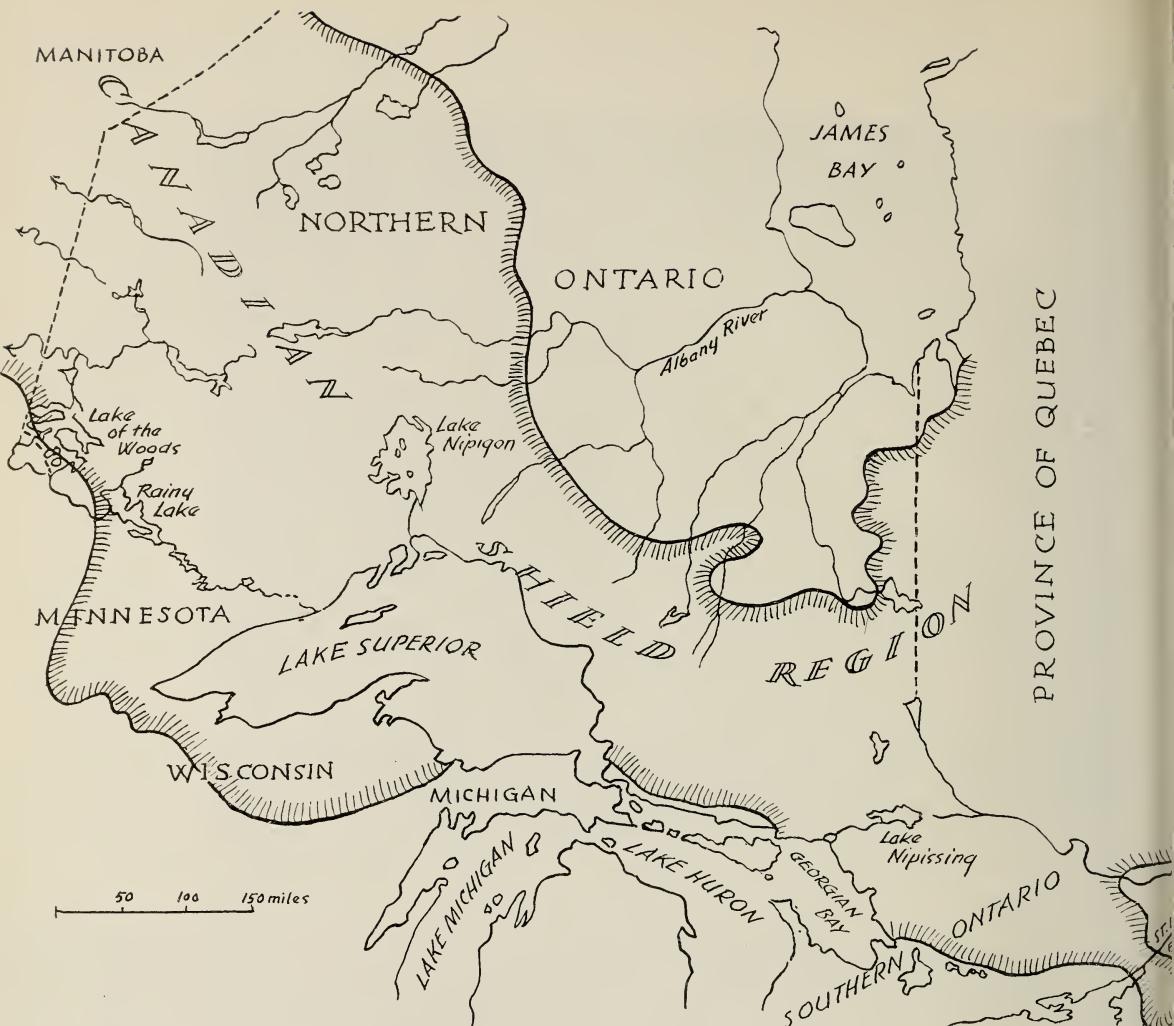
have been accomplished. Its personnel passed on information which came to them concerning the location of sites, and in numerous other ways its facilities aided in the recording programme. To all of these agencies, and to the many individuals who helped along the way, a debt of great gratitude is due, not only for direct aid, but also for encouragement and incidental support. Finally, the Royal Ontario Museum has happily been able to give increasing support to the recording project. It is the repository for the reproductions made by Mr. Dewdney, where students will have access to them for study, so far as is consistent with their good preservation.

Care has been taken to make the Museum's records as comprehensive and detailed as possible. Black and white line drawings to the scale of one inch to the foot show the disposition of all discernible paintings on each face of a given site, the elevation of the paintings above the water on the date of recording, the special features of the site (lichen growth, cracks, etc.), and the exact geographical location. Colour transparencies on file for the great majority of the sites record the landscape setting, relative variations in colour, and in many cases detailed close-ups (up to .5 metres) recording lichen growth, lime precipitates, flaking, and pigmentation. In addition Dewdney has executed full-size water colour copies of all the more significant and representative pictographs, many of which are reproduced in this book as half-tone photo-engravings. Finally, notes on the sites themselves, ethnological material related to the sites, and records of interviews with contemporary Indians are also on file, providing a wealth of supplemental data for future study. This information is available to responsible researchers.

It was possible to include only a part of this material in the present publication, but every effort has been made to cover it in as thorough and representative a way as the limits of space would allow. Actually there is at least a brief reference to every recorded site, and only a half dozen of the minor sites are left unrepresented in the illustrations.

In Ontario, rock paintings occur in the country covered by the Canadian Shield. Outside of that area, there appear to be few outcroppings which were attractive for the purpose. The Shield extends in a vast horseshoe around Hudson Bay, swinging south to the northern shores of the Great Lakes, then northward, curving both into the Labrador peninsula and into the regions west of the Bay. Rock paintings have been found and recorded along its extreme southern border at Bon Echo Lake in Hastings County, along the French River, at Espanola, Agawa Bay, and Lake Nipigon. They have also been located at many points in Quetico Park and along the Rainy River drainage. North of the above places, they have been found at many spots deep in the Shield area, such as Lake Missinaibi, Vermilion River, Lake Mameigwess, Route Lake, Lake Timagami, Diamond Lake, Ferris Lake, Deer Lake, and White Dog Portage. On the United States side of the border, and still on the Shield, or on its fringes, sites have been located at Hegman Lake, and on the Kawishiwi River in Minnesota, and in the Fayette Peninsula in Lake Michigan. The most prolific areas have been those along the Rainy

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC



River and Lake of the Woods, but this may be due to more intensive study and to the fact that it is much more of a thoroughfare and therefore better known. Quite possibly, some districts now sparsely represented in the collection of reproductions may yet yield equally abundant results. North of points where the Shield ceases to show, no rock paintings occur; this area includes much of Ontario immediately south of James Bay and Hudson Bay.

The Canadian Shield country is a land of rocks, rivers, and lakes, with perhaps somewhat more water than land. The elevation is generally not great, although in some points it rises to as much as 4000 feet above sea level. Rapids and waterfalls are often impediments to navigation. The land is covered with a dense growth of mixed coniferous and deciduous forests, consisting of spruce, tamarack, jack pine, birch, and poplar. Except in the southernmost reaches, along the Rainy River drainage, and in the districts of

Parry Sound, Muskoka, Nipissing, and southward, no hardwoods are present. The forest is inhabited by numerous species of animals, notably the beaver, otter, mink, fisher, foxes, wolves, black bears, and rabbits. Moose are now common, elk are absent, and caribou present only in small herds in parts of the area. Wildfowl are abundant in season, particularly ducks, geese, loons, and others which habitually continue northward for the breeding season. The streams and lakes abound in fish of many species. Snakes, though found occasionally, are not very abundant; they are the cause of much comment when seen.

To its Indian inhabitants, the region must have been both a paradise and a severe challenge. Despite the dense forests, one could travel almost anywhere by water, using canoes in the summer and snowshoes and toboggans in the winter when the lakes and rivers were frozen. Food was usually reasonably abundant in the form of fish and game and berries, but at times it was hard to find, and hunger was the consequence for the unlucky hunter and his dependents. Materials for wigwams and tipis were everywhere, in the form of birch bark and poles, but they were impermanent. The skins of animals to be used as lodge coverings were harder to come by, but could usually be had for the effort; they were likewise sought for winter clothing. Winters were often bitterly cold and the snows deep; summers were hot, and accompanied by clouds of mosquitoes and other biting insects which made life miserable for all human inhabitants. Agriculture under aboriginal conditions was impracticable. Hunting and fishing were thus the only available means of subsistence in most areas (apart from a little berry-picking), and the former was subject to those cyclic variations in the game supply which periodically imposed severe hardships upon the inhabitants. In those parts of the Shield country where they could be had, the Indians were more fortunate in having the additional support of wild rice and maple sugar to help them through the lean months.

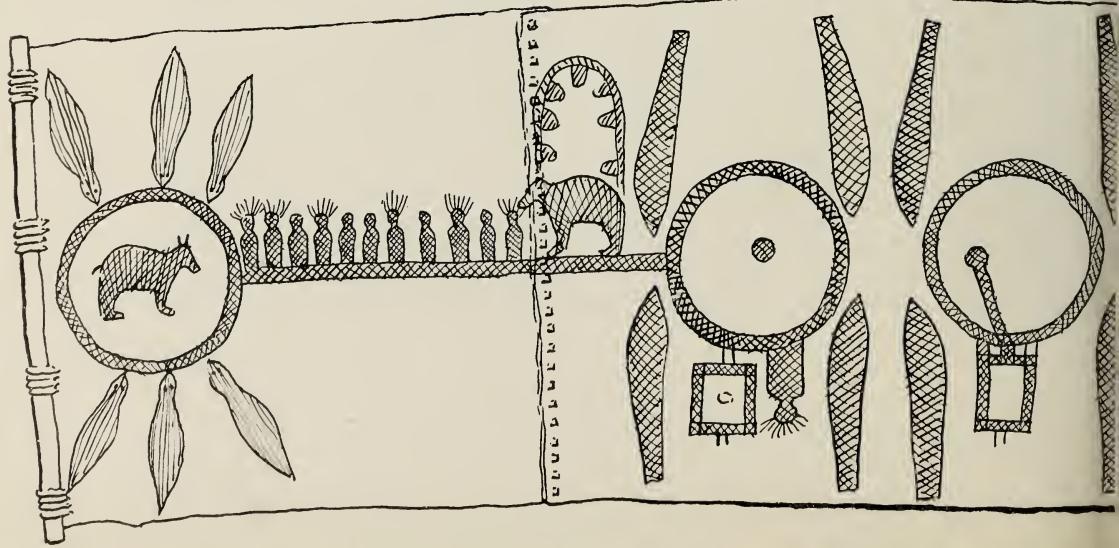
This land of shining waters and gloomy forest was the general environment in which the painters of the rock pictures were born, lived their lives, and went finally to their happy hunting ground. It was by turn benign and cruel, beautiful and harsh, ample and niggardly, but always inscrutable. To the Indian's mind, there must have been forces at work whose nature he could but dimly surmise, and it was therefore to him the part of wisdom to try to keep in their favour. Alternatively, some of these forces could be harnessed, so to speak, to cause injury or death to others, or by suitable rituals cajoled into assuming a friendly attitude to the supplicant. The world was to these people composed not only of the tangible and the visible but also of much which was invisible and immaterial.

The archaeological history of the country north of the Great Lakes is only beginning to be understood, but numerous students are interested in its pre-history. Mr. Thomas E. Lee, formerly of the National Museum of Canada, and Dr. Emerson F. Greenman, of the University of Michigan, have shown that there were human occupants at the edge of the ice sheets as they re-

treated northward some 8,000 to 9,000 years ago, and that later inhabitants made and used pottery. Long before pottery-making became known, however, there was a group, at least along the more southern reaches of the area, who made extensive use of copper for tools and implements; they are known to us as the Old Copper Culture people, and are believed to have endured from 5000 B.C. to 1500 B.C. Sites of this culture have been found in numerous places in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and at Reflection Bay, Lake Nipigon, and elsewhere in Ontario. Later cultures were the Early Woodland, which seems to have come to an end between 500 B.C. and 100 B.C.; it was characterized by burial mounds, pottery, and possibly the use of tobacco and the pipe; and the Middle Woodland and Late Woodland cultures which succeeded it. There is much yet to be learned about these, as well as about the earlier cultures, and several students are engaged in the task or have already contributed to it. Dr. R. S. MacNeish of the National Museum of Canada, Dr. Norman Emerson and Dr. Robert C. Dailey of the University of Toronto, Dr. George I. Quimby of the Chicago Natural History Museum, and Walter A. Kenyon of the Royal Ontario Museum are some of the investigators of the numerous problems which still remain before the prehistory of the Shield country will become clear. (For further reading, consult: Quimby, *Indian Life in the Upper Great Lakes*; MacNeish, *Introduction to the Archaeology of Southeast Manitoba*.)

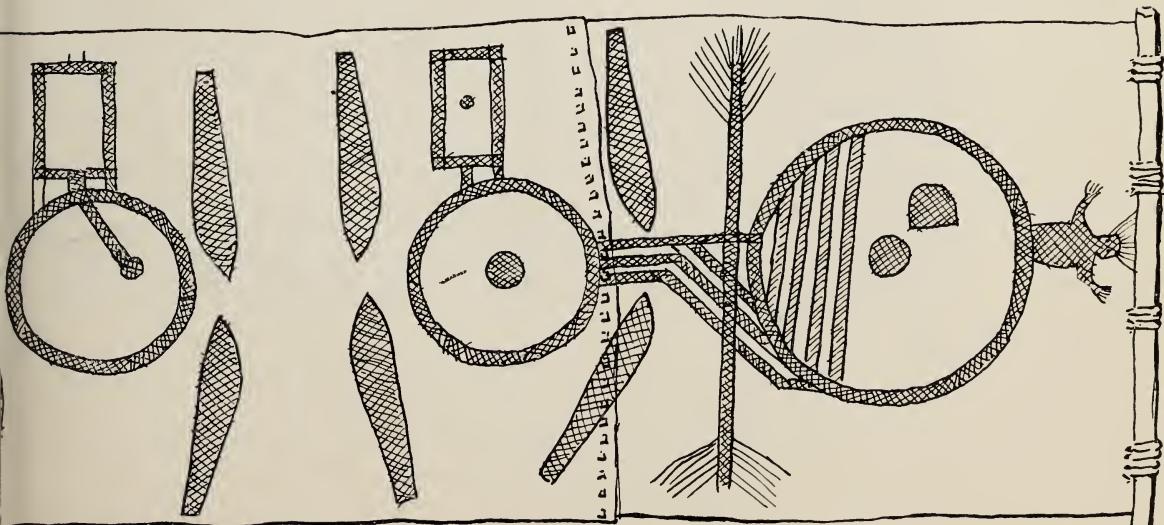
The break between the archaeological and the ethnological cultures came of course with the arrival on the scene of the first white men. None of the explorers mention, so far as this writer is aware, the presence of pottery among the Indians whom they met in the Shield country, but in most other respects the Indians seem to have been living much as they had been doing for a long time. Perhaps pottery was only used in places where it was convenient to do so, although this does not seem to have been the case in prehistoric times. In any event, the historic Indians were all Algonkian-speaking, with the possible exception that there may have been some Siouan-speaking groups west of Lake Superior, and all may be classed in the ethnographic group of

The Grassy Narrows scroll



Eastern Woodlands people. Precisely where the various Indian groups were living when the country was first visited by white men it is now impossible to say with assurance, but it would appear that the Ottawas and the Nipissings were living east of Georgian Bay and perhaps northward, while the Ojibwa occupied virtually all the remainder of the Ontario portion of the Shield as well as the southern shores of Lake Superior. The Cree lived on parts of the Shield in Quebec, Manitoba, and westward, but probably never held any parts of it in Ontario. It is known that during the historic period there have been various movements of peoples, probably not of great significance so far as rock paintings are concerned, but deserving of note. The Ottawa, after much wandering, finally came to settle chiefly on Manitoulin Island, while the Ojibwa moved into the territory lately vacated by them. The Ojibwa also moved into the southern peninsula of Ontario, which had once been the homeland of the Huron and their kin, and have occupied those portions of the Shield which lie in that part of the Province, as well as some other areas. At the time when this expansion was taking place, a branch of the Ojibwa, living near the falls of St. Mary's River, and for that reason known to the French as the Saulteurs (or Saulteaux), began to push westward over large portions of the present districts of Kenora and Rainy River and even further west. The cultural differences among these groups, however, is slight. One of the most interesting aspects of their life, from the point of view of the present discussion, is the existence among the Ojibwa of the secret society called the Grand Medicine Society or Midaywiwin. This organization was extremely important in Ojibwa life, and most men strove to become members of it at some time during their lifetime. Those who became leaders or Miday were thought to possess great supernatural power; they had long rituals to remember, and to help them to do so they frequently recorded them upon rolls of birchbark. Pictures of birds, animals, and men were scratched into the inner surface of the bark to serve as a reminder of the various stages in the ceremony and of the sequence of songs. It was also rather common for the

(see page 13)



men to scratch symbols of their clans upon their war clubs, pipe stems, and other personal belongings, and the same symbols were sometimes incised upon their grave markers.

From what has already been said, it is clear that the Indian occupation of the Canadian Shield country goes a long way back in time, and that there has been a succession of peoples living in it. That there was change and movements of groups is certain. The rock paintings could, at least in theory, be due in whole or in part to any one of them. In practice, it seems impossible that any of the paintings could have withstood the severe weathering to which they would have been subjected during the time-span covered by the period of human occupation. To this writer, it seems improbable that they could have lasted even since Early Woodland times. If this reasoning holds, those now in existence are most likely the work of a people of Woodland culture, probably the Late Woodland of prehistoric and Eastern Woodland of early historic times.

The rock paintings in Ontario are drawings of various sorts usually made on the smooth surface of granite or similar rock outcroppings along the shores of lakes and rivers. Vertical or nearly vertical faces presented the most desirable situations, but this could be affected by the presence of lichens, fissures, and so on. Not all smooth rock faces were utilized, nor were all those near streams and lakes; the choice was seemingly capricious but may have depended upon factors at which we can only guess. Even today, miscellaneous little objects seemingly purposely left by Indians at the sites of some rock paintings suggest the idea of offerings to spirits of the place; if this is so, an idea that the place was the abode of spirits may have been one of the controlling factors in the choice of sites. As for lichen-covered rocks, it would seem natural that the Indians would avoid them as locations for their rock paintings, but other considerations may have dictated otherwise. (Lichens have probably destroyed many rock paintings, but how extensive such damage may be it would be impossible to determine. Studies are being made on the growth of lichen, and on other matters connected with them, which may throw some light on the problem.)

It is conceivable that there is some pattern or plan to the general location of rock paintings, but, if this is true, it has still to be worked out. Were they placed only at the abodes of spirits? Were they scattered haphazardly in remote as well as in accessible places? Were they located only along important routes, or along routes used only at certain seasons or for certain purposes? The answers to these, and to many other questions, still have to be found, but should be interesting when discovered.

If a naturally smooth rock face was always chosen, it would not be necessary for the artist to prepare it for painting in any way. He would, however, need to select a face which he could reach from a canoe or at least from the ice; that is, an almost sheer cliff rising from the water. Failing such a site, he could and often did choose a face which, though well above the water level,

could still be reached from a ledge. Only a very few rock paintings exist in Ontario where the means of access is not now apparent. Having selected the location, and presumably made whatever religious observances may have been necessary, the Indian painter still needed to make ready his pigments. This was seldom an arduous task, for the Indians were well aware of innumerable sources of pigment and were entirely familiar with their preparation and uses. They employed them extensively in early historic times and almost certainly in prehistoric times as well to paint designs upon their faces, arms, and bodies, and sometimes upon their belongings. Moreover, the pigments used in rock paintings—namely, the two oxides of iron—were abundant in the area, and it was only necessary to gather them and crush them to a powder. A white pigment, whose composition is uncertain, was occasionally used in the rock paintings; it may have been guano, or a white earth. The iron oxides, when mixed with some binder, were ready for use. Although preliminary tests have been made to determine the nature of this binder, it remains unknown. More complicated tests may reveal its identity. At any rate, good binders were certainly available to the Indians, and beyond a doubt they used one or more of them, and possibly all. Gulls' eggs would serve admirably and bears' grease would likewise suffice. Beaver tails and fish roe, the hoofs of moose and deer, could all be boiled to make glue, and fish and rabbit skins may have been utilized also. Any one of these, mixed with red ochre or white earth, would adhere well to the rock. From the examination so far made, it appears that the binder leaches out in time, leaving the pigment firmly attached to the microscopic indentations and convexities of the rock surface. The oxide pigments were of two colours, red and yellow; but since they were seldom pure, all gradations between these may be found in the paintings. The colours were in some cases applied with the fingers, as Dewdney has pointed out on p. 17, but it seems likely that brushes, probably made by breaking back the fibres of small plants like the willow would frequently serve as well. Whether brushes made of moose or deer hair were used is problematical, though they could readily have been made. With such simple equipment—mineral pigments, grease or glue, fingers or a simple brush, and a canoe to stand in when the work was done in the summer—the great panoply of Shield country rock paintings must have been done.

The rock paintings still in existence mirror indirectly some aspects of their makers' attitudes to their external world and something of their thinking. They portray certain of their game animals, such as moose and bear; and the canoes and wigwams shown illustrate the world of their own creation. Over and above these aspects, the paintings also illustrate some of the creatures of the native's mind, in the shape of mythical or supernatural beings like the thunderbird, the serpent, the turtle, and the pipe-smoking moose. All of the pictures were presumably placed on the rocks for some purpose, the most obvious being to convey a message. If they were intended as messages, some were probably addressed to the attention of other Indians; some to the

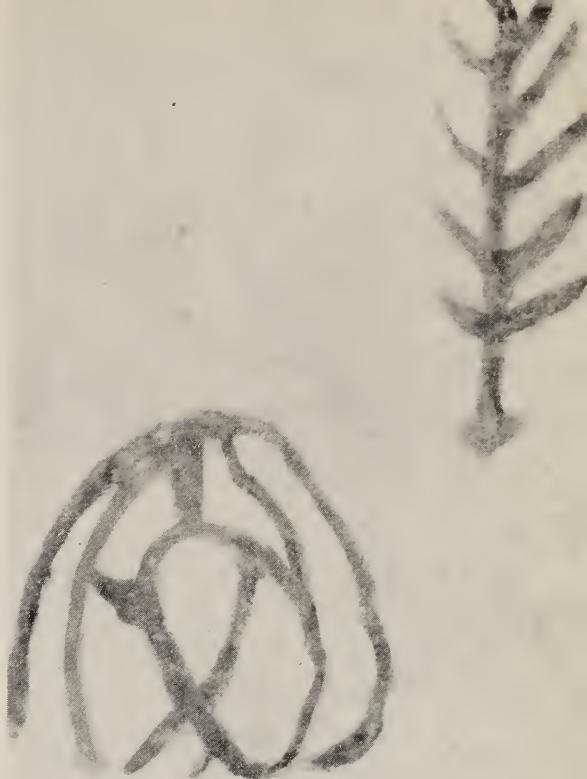
inhabitants of the spirit world. Any which were not, strictly speaking, messages may have been memorials of one sort or another, illustrations of myths, or markers of spots of some ritual or other significance. These are but suggestions of the purposes which may have motivated the placing of the rock paintings where they are found today.

As Dewdney has made clear, they have already yielded much information upon such matters as technique and art styles, and shown that some of the sites were used more than once. There is still much that is not understood, however, and the remaining questions pose a challenge to further study. We should like to know if the rock paintings were all made by the same people; over what time-span they were created; the significance of the various paintings; the meaning of the conventionalized symbols, and many more hidden matters.

Three generations ago, Garrick Mallery wrote that "the interpretation of the ancient forms is to be obtained, if at all, not by the discovery of any hermeneutic key, but by an understanding of the modern forms, some of which fortunately can be interpreted by living men; and when this is not the case the more recent forms can be made intelligible at least in part by a thorough knowledge of the historic tribes, including their sociology, philosophy, and arts, such as is becoming acquired, and of their sign language" (Mallery, 1886, p. 16). What Mallery wrote then still holds today for the Great Lakes rock paintings, except that now it would be extremely difficult to find living men who could reliably interpret any of them. But it seems true that a sound knowledge of Ojibwa—or if one prefers, central Algonkian—mythology, legends, ritual practices, and material culture would go a long way towards elucidating many of the symbols and pictures on the rocks. Perhaps of all these aspects of culture, the myths and legends are the most important, for often supernatural creatures are described in them. Following these, a knowledge of the practices of the Midaywiwin or Grand Medicine Society, with its accompanying mnemonic records on birchbark rolls, would be helpful. Bark records of other sorts could also supply some clues. The sign language may have some utility, as Mallery believed it would, for it was widely used and understood; it should be examined with the interpretation of the rock paintings in mind.

Except in the case of the paintings at Agawa Rock, we have no first-hand interpretation of the meanings. The interpretation of these depends upon copies made by Indians on birchbark for Henry Schoolcraft, and upon the verbal descriptions of them which the Indians gave him. They suggest that each symbol was intended to be read by itself, and the meanings then combined and modified so as to make sense; the four disks over the two convex lines at Agawa Rock are taken to indicate a four days' (or suns') journey over the basin of the water. This is in marked distinction to the bark etchings, in which the figures or symbols are arranged in horizontal lines, and the "reading" or interpretation is intended to begin at the right or left and pro-

A shaman  
in a sweat  
lodge?



ceed in either direction. The ideas are thus linked in a sequence. In the rock paintings, it appears that they should be considered as a unit, though there may be more than one unit in a group.

The afore-mentioned bark rolls of the Midaywiwin often afford important clues to the identity of the symbols in the rocks. Several of them, for example, show tree-like figures which are interpreted as the "tree of medicine." A similar figure appears in Face IX at Site 7, along with a conventionalized figure of a man inside a wigwam-like structure. From a knowledge of Ojibwa culture it is possible to conjecture that this group was intended to show a shaman taking a sweat bath in a sweat lodge (which is constructed like a miniature wigwam), for this ceremony of physical and spiritual purification had to be gone through before he could undertake an important ritual, and that he would then use some of the "tree of medicine." Or again, one finds

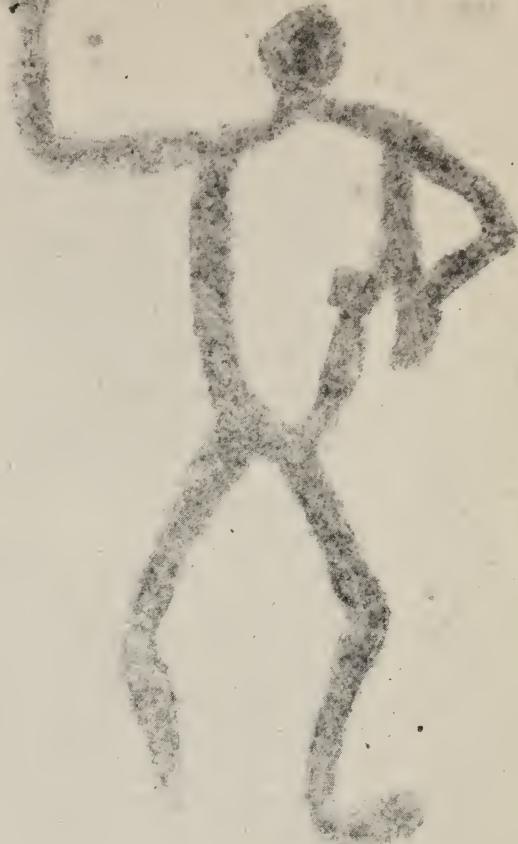


in the Miday rolls figures of birds, some of which are described as such powerful creatures as the grey eagle, others as the thunderbird. Both may be shown naturalistically or conventionally. Similar figures occur on the rock paintings, though the conventionalized form seems to be more common, and the assumption, perhaps not warranted in all cases, is that the thunderbird is meant. Unlike the eagle, the thunderbird was a supernatural creature who lived high in the sky beyond the sight of men, but made his presence known by flapping his wings to cause the thunder, and by blinking his eyes to cause the lightning. Still a third symbol in the rock paintings may be identified by means of the bark rolls, and this is the Great Lynx or Mishipizhiw. Mishipizhiw is also a supernatural creature, highly dangerous, who inhabits the rapids on some streams; for instance, the Manitou Rapids on the Rainy River, near Emo. He appears in some of the bark rolls as a cat-like creature with large ears or horns and a long tail. So frequent a motif did he become in Ojibwa art that he is sometimes depicted on their woven bags. Mishipizhiw undoubtedly appears at Site 36 in the normal form. John Tanner (James, *A Narrative of the Captivity . . . of John Tanner*, p. 335), an early author who lived most of his life among the Ojibwa, illustrated the Great Lynx as a cat-like creature with spiny back, and from this and similar evidence, we may assume that the spiny-backed creature which looks like a horned serpent at Site 8 is also intended for him. It is worthy of note here that in the bark rolls, lines radiating from a figure of a man or an animal are meant to imply "power" in that figure; hence the spines on the back of the Great Lynx may be a device for emphasizing his great supernatural power.

By comparing the pictures in the rock paintings one by one with those on the birchbark rolls and other records referring to the Algonkians of the Great Lakes area, it should be possible to identify many more of them. A similar study of the supernatural beings in the mythology of the Algonkians is likely to result in further identifications.

Even though the identity of one or more symbols or figures in a rock

Human  
figure  
from  
Blindfold  
Lake  
site



painting may have been established, the signification of the group as a whole may still remain to be solved. It is not, apparently, a simple procedure of adding one identification to another and getting a sort of sentence as a result. Alternative meanings may be possible for one or more of the figures, and it then becomes a matter of choosing between the alternatives until one has hit upon a combination which makes sense. Of course, in some cases, the meaning may be fairly obvious, but in others the solution may be extremely difficult. Even the Miday bark rolls, although the commonest of Ojibwa records and the most generally understood, are said to be sometimes quite beyond the comprehension of Ojibwa men who have not seen that particular roll before, as has been already noted. Likewise, the rock paintings—even the most recent—may present difficulties in total interpretation which defy solution.

It is thus possible to compare the rock paintings in the Shield country with the drawings to be seen in the Miday rolls and other incised bark and wood records, and with the descriptions to be found in the myths and legends of the historic occupants. By the same token, they may be compared with rock paintings and other pictorial representations from other areas, and with the descriptions in non-Algonkian mythologies and similar sources. It should also be borne in mind that some of the Algonkian legends and myths may be based upon rock paintings from an earlier, pre-Algonkian occupation of the country, in which case the lines of distinction might be considerably blurred. This does not rule out the possibility, however, that some of the rock paintings, if they antedate the Algonkian occupation, may have only a superficial connection with that occupation; indeed, they might well reflect a quite different set of ideas and a different galaxy of supernatural beings and be executed in a different style.

Such differences in style might be demonstrated by one or other of the techniques described by Dewdney, and by the rather mechanical process of putting each recorded symbol or figure on an index card. The cards might then be sorted and the various symbols grouped together in such a way that there was a progression by minor changes from a more obvious or naturalistic form (e.g. a moose) to a conventional or abstract form. A procedure of this sort might help to identify some symbols not now understood, but, perhaps more important, it might be able to reveal whether there is a residue of symbols which cannot be connected stylistically with others. If there are figures or symbols which cannot be shown to be related to any of those connected with Ojibwa life, there would be a presumption that they might be attributable to people of another culture. Whether such a culture were earlier than the Algonkian occupation would have to be proven by some acceptable method of dating still to be devised.

After four seasons' work, a good representation of the kind of rock paintings left by the Indians of the Great Lakes has been recorded, and is now available for study. It will serve, if no more should be collected, to illustrate the condition, variety, and geographical range of this manifestation of aboriginal occupation of the Canadian Shield. As a form of expression the rock paintings are interesting in themselves. But over and above this, they illuminate some aspects of aboriginal life and culture. Further analysis should yield some clues as to movements of people within the area, and may throw some light upon beliefs held by those groups. Even though much of the information they hold may remain forever hidden from us, the search for it is always alluring, and each clue found is worthy of the effort.

## *Appendices*

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## *Pictograph Sites*

SITES marked by (\*) are not illustrated in this book. Sites marked by (†) are outside of the Canadian Shield.

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